

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

Horizon

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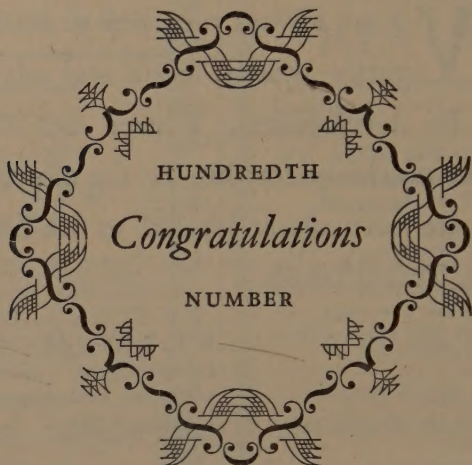
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COMMENT

THE appearance—amid the fears of war and the falling almond blossom—of the hundredth number of HORIZON requires brief notice. The correct procedure is to offer a costly banquet at which a Minister of State with cultural leanings, at least one can be found, delivers his congratulations; mentioning the great part which HORIZON has played in improving international relations, by making known the splendid achievements of British art and literature to a troubled world and earning dollars. High officials of the British Council, the Central Office of Information, the Arts Council, the Third Programme and such arbiters as Joad, Wilson Harris, Walter Elliot, Douglas Woodruff, Ivor Brown, D. N. Pritt and Gracie Fields explain why they have not always seen eye to eye with us. Telegrams regretting their unavoidable absence are read from Bernard Shaw, E. M. Forster, Marshal Smuts, Gide, Jung and Zhdanov. The Editor, replying, makes a feeble joke about the last paper cut, recalls the magazine's modest beginnings, hints at future expansion, delivers thanks to all present: the gorged columnists then retire to decide whether the event is worth a paragraph.

It would be more economical and more rewarding to tell the truth, to say that HORIZON has reached or rather tottered to its centenary on two legs, the generosity of its proprietor and the obstinacy of its editor. Many another owner would have long ago abandoned the thankless task of financing a serious magazine, many another editor would have preferred resignation to the prolonged and widespread unpopularity which accompanies his position. But there is *certain plaisir aristocratique à déplaire* and in addition there are a few loyal friends of the magazine on whose support we have always been able to count. They include (1) the small body of constant subscribers, many of whom began with the first number and who are now reinforced by a large section in America, (2) our regular advertisers, those publishers who have consistently taken advertising space through thick and thin—and numbers ten and eleven were very thin indeed, (3) a few writers and journalists who have helped either by giving us their best work (often for nothing) or by getting publicity for us when our liberties were threatened, or by fighting our battles at high official levels: these include allies in the British Council,

The Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information who helped to spread us—none too thickly—over the globe.

Among our enemies I would list those hidden bureaucrats whose frustrating activities give us persecution mania, then a few malignant rivals and rejectees and, more serious, the devoted ill-wishers who spend their time announcing that we have ceased or are just about to cease publication.

During the eight years I have edited HORIZON we have witnessed a continuous decline in all the arts. Literature has been robbed of Joyce, Yeats, Virginia Woolf, Wells, Valéry, Freud, Frazer, to name but a few, and their places are not being filled. This is not because there is a decline in talent, but rather owing to the gradual dissolution of the environment in which it ripens. There is a decay in communication owing to the collapse of that highly cultivated well-to-do world bourgeoisie who provided the *avant-garde* artists—writer, painter, musician, architect—with the perfect audience (compare the paintings left by Frank Stoop to the Tate Gallery with those within its present purchasing power). Yeats, Joyce, Rilke were largely supported by a few devoted ladies of this milieu. There is also disintegration in the material to communicate; the truth—beauty—goodness soap-bubble which we could all blow and admire and waft to each other has vanished and no comparable illusion can replace it. All this, however, might well prove an inspiration to an artist and not a handicap were not the political uncertainties of the world so disquieting. Birds are silent in an eclipse and now that Hitler ruins us from his Bunker while Molotov makes Fascists of us all as vast radio-active clouds prepare to roll across the continent, there is no urge to make music. There is one solution that artists perhaps have not considered enough. Maugham says that a chief pleasure of money is the being able to tell any man to go to hell. But a little thought reveals that it is possible to do this without a penny. Every writer I know under sixty (except one or two prosperous novelists) is ruining his talent through hack-work and part-time jobs: there is always a fistula through which the juices of genius are leaking away into some disgusting receptacle. Perhaps—since the State won't help us and the patron can't—we should all learn to be much poorer, and should recognize poverty as the only decoration which the lover of art and liberty is awarded.

HORIZON has become aware of the decline of literature through

the increasing difficulty of obtaining contributions. If the reader will glance at the present issue he will see that there is a poem by Miss Sitwell. In point of fact, six eminent poets were asked for a contribution for our hundredth number; the other five had nothing ready. Sorry, no eggs. Of the six, Miss Sitwell, alas! is alone able to devote her time to poetry: all the others are hard-working officials, publishers, teachers, etc., in fact culture diffusionists, selling culture for a living like the Aga Khan his bath-water. We are sometimes attacked by professional Cornishmen or Fleet Street Welsh for not being adequately regional. Had we considered the whole British Isles as our region we would long ago have become extinct: that we have been able to fill so many numbers is due to the wealth which our international humanist bias has allowed us to glean from America, France and Italy. Thus in the last number we had articles by two Italians and one Frenchman with poems by three Americans. In this number Lionel Trilling, a professor at Columbia University, comes forward with one of the wisest and most passionate pieces of modern criticism, while a French painter, one of the few deeply original talents of the pre-war generation, is also the subject of an article. Looked at in a different way, this hundredth number includes the work of two of our established humanists—a lover of Pope and a disciple of Hume and Voltaire, of two young authors whose first published work appeared in HORIZON (we are always reproached with never making any discoveries) and of an American and English writer of my own generation whose choice of subjects and whose treatment of them reveal that they too subscribe to the despised religion of humanity. It is no accident, in fact, as Marxists say, that HORIZON stands exposed through this number as a decadent organ of bourgeois formalist liberal humanism. Bourgeois—because we believe that the perfect medium for art and artists is an enlightened bourgeoisie with its guarantees of peace, privacy and a regular income, and because an intense hatred of the bourgeoisie is one of its most rewarding attributes. Formalists, because we believe that the cup generally outlives the wine which it was made to hold. Humanists because our mortality is the one fact of which we can be certain—‘our only portion is the estate of man’—and that estate, as we are continually finding out, is much richer than earlier humanists guessed, containing as it does such vast unexplored tracks of beast and angel, ape and automat.

Every human being enjoys an exquisite privilege, that of being alive, and suffers, in the knowledge that he must die, an unbearable torture. To all those so privileged we owe respect and honour, to all those under that common death sentence pity and love. Only the ineradicable human vices—cruelty, stupidity, vanity, thoughtlessness—can make nonsense of this theorem and prevent us from understanding that human life is sacred and that consciousness is one—for the sum of human consciousness is what is loaned to the living for the appreciation of the world and should be handed on in better shape to those who follow.

But we live in a world which has forfeited both the hope which was the promise of Christianity and the happiness which the philosophers offered. Our vices at last have found weapons which permit us to do evil on the scale which hitherto we had only imagined, and so while there are Russian militarists and American strategists and English physicists and Jewish terrorists and Arab Nationalists and Balkan Separatists and Social Realists and Marxist Theorists, and while the fate of the world rests between Congress and the Politburo we would be rash to prophesy for HORIZON a further existence of more than two years. This will enable us to have covered the whole of the forties and to have enslumbered the arts, like a skilled anaesthetist, into final oblivion.

There is one way in which everyone can help HORIZON: by procuring more subscribers. In the last year we have lost some English subscribers but doubled our subscriptions in America, which more and more is becoming the literary land of promise, and at this rate there will soon be more American than English subscribers. I know that prophets are without honour in their own country—it is the only way they can get their work done. But if a few hundred more people here could be presented with subscriptions by their friends, or themselves induced to subscribe, we might be able to face increases in the cost of printing and an increased rent without having to put up our price, and thus continue a little longer our unavailing championship of the living sheep against their dying slaughterers, of the artist against society and the people against the State.

EDITH SITWELL

THE COAT OF FIRE

Amid the thunders of the falling Dark
In the Tartarean darkness of the fog
I walk, a Pillar of Fire
On pavements wide as the long boulevard
Of Hell . . . where purgatories, heavens, hells, and worlds
Wrought by illusion, hide in the human breast
And tear the enclosing heart . . . And the snow fell
(Thin flakes of ash from Gomorrah) on blind faces
Turned to the heedless sky . . . A dress has the sound
Of Reality, reverberates like thunder.
And ghosts of aeons and of equinoxes
(Of moments that seemed aeons, and long partings)
Take on the forms of fashionable women
With veils that hide a new Catastrophe, and under
Is the fall of a world that was a heart. Some doomed to
descend
Through all the hells and change into the Dog
Without its faithfulness, the Crocodile
Without its watchfulness, and then to Pampean mud.
In the circles of the city's hells beneath the fog
These bear, to light them, in the human breast,
The yellow dull light from the raging human dust,
The dull blue light from the brutes, light red as rust
Of blood from eyeless weeping ghosts, light black as
smoke
From hell. And those breasts bear
No other light. . . . They circle in the snow
Where in the dust the apterous
Fates turned insects whisper 'Now abandon
Man the annelida. Let all be wingless
That hangs between the abyss and Abaddon.'
The Catastrophes with veils and trains drift by,
And I to my heart, a raging Comet, cry

'O heart, my Lucifer ! How fallen art thou
—And lightless I !'

And dresses sweep the dust of mortality
And roll the burden of Atlas' woe changed to a stone
Up to the benches where the beggars sway,
(Their souls alone as on the Judgement Day)
In their Valley of the Myriad Dry Bones under world-tall
houses.

Then with a noise as if in the thunders of the Dark
All sins, griefs, aberrations of the world rolled to confess,
Those myriad Dry Bones rose to testify :
'See her, the Pillar of Fire !

The aeons of Cold

And all the deaths that Adam has endured
Since the first death, can not outfreeze our night!
And where is the fire of love that will warm our hands ?
There is only this conflagration
Of all the sins of the world ! To the dust's busyness
She speaks of the annihilation
Of every form of dust, burned down to Nothingness !
To the small lovers, of a kiss that seems the red
Lightning of Comets firing worlds—and of a Night
That shall outburn all nights that lovers know—
The last red Night before the Judgement Day !
O Pillar of Flame, that drifts across the world to Nowhere !
The eyes are seas of fire ! All forms, all sights,
And all sensations are on fire ! The storms
Of blood, a whirlpool of the flame ! the ears, all sounds
Of all the world, a universe of fire, all smells, a ravening
Raging cyclone of wild fire ! The nose, burned quite away !
The tongue is on fire, all tastes on fire, the mind
Is red as noon upon the Judgement Day !
The tears are rolling, falling worlds of fire !
With what are these on fire ? With passion, hate,
Infatuation, and old age, and death,
With sorrow, longing, and with labouring breath,
And with despair and life are these on fire !
With the illusions of the world, the flames of lust,
And raging red desire !
A Pillar of Fire is she in the empty dust,

And will not change those fires into warmth for our
 hands'
 Said the beggars, lolling and rocking
 The heedless world upon a heaving shoulder.

NOTES

Lines 21, 22, 23 contain references to the Tibetan Book of the Dead.
 Lines 53 to 66 refer to the Buddha's Fire Sermon.

BERTRAND RUSSELL
**THE OUTLOOK FOR
 MANKIND**

THE outlook at the present time is one in which there is a possibility of a happy outcome, but also a possibility of graver disaster than has ever yet befallen the human race. If the happy outcome is to be realized, it will only be because all the powerful nations become aware of the risk of universal disaster. At present, nine people out of ten shut their eyes to this risk, because they prefer a short life and a (more or less) merry one to the survival of their children, or rather to admitting that their children are not likely to survive unless something drastic is done.

Let us begin by enumerating the logical possibilities, without regard to the question whether they are probable or desirable.

First: Russia may convert the Capitalist world, and a Communist empire extend over the whole earth.

Second: Russia may revert to Capitalism, and take to willing co-operation with the West.

Third: Each side may concede to the other a definite sphere, and the world may be divided as the medieval world was divided, between Christendom and Islam, perhaps with occasional minor conflicts as inconclusive and peripheral as the Crusades.

These three possibilities do not involve a world war. If there is a world war, there are three further possibilities:

Fourth: America may be victorious and establish an American world empire.

Fifth: Russia may be victorious and establish a Communist world empire.

Sixth: The war may end in a draw, after which, presumably, each side will prepare for the next bout; or, possibly, they may suddenly revert to the third possibility, as was done at the Peace of Westphalia after the Thirty Years' War.

Let us consider each of these six possibilities.

The first, namely, the victory of Russia by political and propagandist methods, falling short of war, seems to most people in the West highly improbable, and in this view I concur. But I think that to the Soviet Government it seems by no means unlikely. Soviet economists hold that America will suffer an appalling depression, and that all the countries which depend economically on America will be plunged into destitution. (The few Russian economists who expressed a different view have been silenced or liquidated.) This destitution, it is held, will convert the populations to Communism. Consequently, everything that hinders economic recovery in the West is to Russia's interest; in particular, pro-Communist feeling in trade unions is very convenient.

I think a great deal of Russian policy is inspired by the hope of achieving 'peaceful' penetration. Already, largely owing to Western mistakes, the policy has succeeded throughout Eastern Europe, and has good chances of success in Italy and Germany. But I think only ignorance, political and economic, enables Soviet rulers to hope for success in America and Great Britain, and the chance of success in France is very much less than it seemed to be some time ago. Nor is America likely to suffer from a severe depression so long as the Marshall Plan and the risk of war keep American production capacity fully occupied.

The importance of our first possibility, therefore, is not in its likelihood, but in the Soviet belief in its likelihood.

The second possibility, the conversion of Russia to Capitalism, is so improbable that I shall waste no time on it.

The third possibility, that of a rigid delimitation of spheres, is the one which would be adopted if all governments were sane. It has, no doubt, grave difficulties. Germany and China and Persia would have to be partitioned. The Russians would have to discourage Communist propaganda in the West. It might be found necessary to prohibit all trade and travel between the Eastern and Western halves of the world. But given sufficient determination, such a policy might preserve world peace for a long time.

Such a policy might have been practicable if the Soviet Government had been in a different mood. But all the evidence seems to show that the Russian rulers do not believe in the possibility of genuine peace between Capitalism and Communism. One of them, they think, must destroy the other, either by war or by propaganda; and Dialectical Materialism has decreed that the victory will rest with Communism. Whatever might have been possible at one time, I do not think anything can now be done to destroy the Soviet belief in inevitable conflict. This belief is derived partly from experience of Capitalist intervention in the early days of the Russian Revolution, partly from Marxian dogma, but partly also from a surviving belief in 'Holy Russia'. I think we are apt to underrate the element of nationalism, as opposed to Marxism, in the Russian attitude. I am afraid, therefore, that, unless the West can acquire a preponderance of power which the Soviet Government finds undeniable, the hope of securing peace by a delimitation of spheres is very slight. It must be admitted, also, that there are almost insoluble diplomatic obstacles: Constantinople and the Straits, the Arab world (including Palestine), the oil of Persia, and the trade of China, are among the most difficult. It is true that these, severally and collectively, are not worth a world war, but I doubt whether governments will think so.

The fourth possibility, that of a war in which America is victorious, is one which, apparently, most Americans have come to think the most probable of the six. Its course will depend upon whether the Russians have atomic bombs or not. In either case, it may be assumed that they will occupy the Continent up to the Straits of Dover within a few weeks of the outbreak of hostilities. Prominent Continental opponents of Communism will be liquidated. Almost the whole middle class will be set to forced labour in Siberia or on the shores of the White Sea. The Americans will be forced to drop atomic bombs, not only on Russia, but on places in Western Europe where they believe that there are concentrations of Russian forces. What has survived from the late war in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Italy will be destroyed in the course of American bombardment. And if, in the end, the British and Americans expect to be welcomed as liberators, there will be little except ghosts to welcome them. It may be assumed that our side, if victorious, will insist on a change of

regime in Russia, and will try members of the Soviet Government as war criminals. A White Terror will replace the Red Terror, and will probably be at least as terrible. Of those whom war has spared, a large percentage will perish of hunger or disease. Utter ruin will overtake the whole territory from Calais to Vladivostok.

What, meanwhile, will have happened in Great Britain? If the Russians, by that time, have atomic bombs, all our large towns and centres of industry will be practically wiped out, and a considerable fraction of our population will die. Nor is it to be expected that, when our side has achieved victory, Great Britain will recover anything like the position we hold at present. Two victorious wars have brought us to the verge of ruin; a third victory would inevitably precipitate us into the abyss, if it had to be won against atomic bombs. But if Russia does not have atomic bombs, it is possible, though scarcely probable, that we shall not suffer *very* much more in the next war than in the last.

At the end of such a war, the Americans, presumably, would forbid all other nations to possess any of the more destructive weapons. They would establish a military government of the world, which would make peace secure. In the course of a century or so the world would recover from the ravages of war, and mankind might enter upon a period of peaceful prospects, provided the United States used its victory wisely. Beyond a time of appalling disaster there is a hope, on this hypothesis, of a real solution of the world's troubles.

The fifth possibility, that of a Soviet victory, is in one respect like the fourth: it would lead to the establishment of a single military government, which would make great wars impossible. But this would be at the cost of making the world a prison, where the non-Russian population would be engaged in slave labour under conditions of extreme hardship. Every department of art and thought would be minutely regulated by Moscow bureaucrats, to the point where both art and thought would soon stagnate. The only hope for a liberation of the human spirit would be in the gradual growth of laziness and corruption in high places, leading, perhaps, ultimately to a renewed chaos, out of which progress might come as it came after the Dark Ages.

The general behaviour of the Soviet Government since 1945 seems to show that those who inspire its policy believe that they could win a war against the West. I think they are wrong, and it

seems a safe assumption that the United States Government thinks they are wrong. Totalitarian regimes are apt to overestimate their strength, partly from contempt for what seems to them the weakness and slowness of less despotic states. Hitler thought he could win; the Japanese thought they could win. They were mistaken, and I think Stalin is repeating their mistake. But let us try, for a moment, to look at the issue from his point of view.

I think Stalin believes that, both in America and in Britain, munition workers would strike if asked to work for a war against Russia; that crypto-communists would afford him an admirably efficient secret service; that American and African negroes would rebel against white domination; and that among wage earners even those who were not actively pro-Russian, would be very lukewarm in their hostility. I think he has not been told the truth about the efficacy of atomic bombs, because the few Russians who know the truth would risk falling into disfavour if they told it. I think the whole Russian nation, from Stalin downwards, underestimates the part played by America and the British Commonwealth in the defeat of Germany. And lastly, I think they all believe that God (whom they have renamed 'Dialectical Materialism') is on their side. Those who think such delusions incredible should read the biography of Marx. Throughout his life he thought his Party was on the verge of success. A hundred years ago, in the opening words of the Communist Manifesto, he represented all the governments of Europe as trembling before the Communists, of whom there were at that time seventeen. His disciples, ever since, have faithfully echoed the Founder's optimism.

I come at last to the most dreadful of our six possibilities, namely, that there may be a great war ending in a draw, followed by a feverish effort on both sides to renew the combat on more favourable terms. The next war, assuming that it comes fairly soon, will not, I think, put an end to the human race, nor even to civilization. South America and New Zealand are not likely to suffer catastrophically, and probably the central portions of the United States will emerge more or less intact. If the war ends in a draw, this will also apply to large parts of the U.S.S.R. But with a little more science and a little more preparation, such mild and gentle warfare can soon be superseded by fiercer methods. Not only will atomic bombs be more numerous and more powerful, but

bacteriological weapons will probably be made available, and the soil may be rendered incapable of yielding crops. The danger of radio-active clouds is by no means negligible, and they might exterminate all life on the earth, not only human life, but also that of animals and plants. All this is soberly to be expected if the next great war is not the last. And it will not be the last unless one side is completely victorious. Therefore, if war breaks out in some near future, we must not wish to see it ended indecisively, however horrible it may be.

The above review of possibilities has been necessary before considering what we should attempt and what it is permissible to hope. It seems to result from our survey that what would be best would be an agreement to partition the world and not interfere in each other's zones; next to that, a war soon, ending in an American victory; next, a Russian victory; and, worst of all, a draw. I am afraid it is useless to advocate a partition by agreement, because the Russians will not observe agreements. The only possible way, so far as I can see, of avoiding a war between Russia and America, is to make it obvious to the Russian Government that, in a war, America would be victorious. It is obvious that the Marshall Plan, combined with a West-European Union, gives the best hope of this, as well as of bringing victory to the West if there is a war. But for the reasons already given it is very difficult to persuade the Russians that they would not win. I do not myself believe that it is possible to persuade them, and therefore I expect a war. Nevertheless, we should do all in our power to make the Russians afraid of war. Fortunately, the measures necessary to that end are exactly the same as those involved in preparing for war if it should come, namely, to build up the economic and military strength of Western Europe in close alliance with the United States.

There are various things that the Western governments ought to do. The United States Government is doing as much as American public opinion will tolerate towards building up the strength and unity of Western Europe, and making it evident that, for both economic and military reasons, it is to the interest of Western Europe to co-operate closely with America. But I think there is one further step which ought to be taken by the United States and Great Britain jointly, and that is to inform the Soviet Government, as well as the governments of the Balkan

States conterminous with Greece, that any further breach of treaty will be considered a *casus belli*, and so will any further *coup* analogous to that in Czechoslovakia. The Communist governments in Eastern Europe have all been established in spite of agreements for the preservation of democracy; no more of this sort of thing should be tolerated. It is too late to save Finland, but not too late to save the other Scandinavian countries, which obviously are next on the list of Russia's victims. We should also be firm about Austria, and should do our utmost to preserve Italy from Communist domination.

One of the worst muddles made by the Western Powers has been in regard to Germany. It has been obvious for at least two years that there was no hope of a single government for Germany short of a war, but our governments have been dilatory from unwillingness to face facts. Given that Germany must be divided, we ought to try to secure the support of Trizonia. Instead of doing so, we have reduced rations to so low a point that Western Germans, in large numbers, have begun to look to Russia for salvation. It is obviously to our interest to see that they are adequately fed, and that the industry of the Ruhr is revived as fully as possible, with proper safeguards to prevent it from being used against us. But so many people are still thinking in terms of the last war rather than the next, that a sensible policy as regards Germany encounters violent opposition, especially in the countries that the Nazis occupied. The widespread reluctance to face the probability of another world war has made it difficult to bring home the necessity of treating Germany, not as our late enemy, but as our potential future ally.

The British Government is to blame for failure to make the British public realize the situation. Even if the Russians do not have atomic bombs, England must suffer appallingly. If the liberation of France, Belgium and Holland had been delayed a little longer, German V.2s would have destroyed most of London. Russian rockets, we must assume, will be at least equally effective after the first few months of the next war. It is therefore clearly the duty of the British Government to concert with the Dominions a large-scale scheme of emigration, especially for mothers and children. If our population were reduced to twenty millions, mostly adult, we could live on home-grown food, and there could be a great deal more dispersal than is possible at present. Not only would

innumerable lives be spared to become the next generation, but our defensive strength would be greatly increased. The promotion of large-scale emigration to the Dominions and to British Africa is, to my mind, far more important than a frantic effort to stimulate our exports, and is only prevented by a widespread lack of courage in facing facts. Aircraft construction ought to take place mainly in Canada, since everything in Great Britain will be liable to destruction by bombs.

In France, the strength of the Communists seems to be on the wane, but is still great enough in the trade unions to weaken France seriously in the event of a war. Every possible effort should be made to diminish the hold of Communism on French wage earners. This is mainly an economic question, and therefore one in which the United States must play the decisive part. I think that a rapidly developing public opinion in America is making it increasingly probable that Congress will sanction what is necessary.

Italy is a more dubious case. What ought to be done on our side is essentially the same as what ought to be done in regard to France, but success is more questionable. It is, however, still probable that, by vigour and courage, Italy can be kept on our side.

The general policy of forming a Western European Union is undoubtedly right, but it should be pursued more quickly and more wholeheartedly. Western Germany should be admitted, not as a dependency, but as an autonomous state, subject to certain safeguards. There should be complete military and economic co-operation among the States of the Union, and a realization that without this there is little hope of escaping from utter devastation.

There are, of course, many aspects of the Russo-American conflict which are not European. China, Persia, and the territory of the Arab League are all involved. In none of these should a policy of appeasement be pursued. For sooner or later, as after Munich, further appeasements will be felt to be intolerable, and then we shall be weakened by previous concessions.

In the policy of the Western Powers, there should be two paramount aims. First, to secure peace if possible; second, if that is not possible, to secure victory. There is only one way in which peace can be preserved, and that is by such a show of strength that Russia will not venture on any further aggression. I doubt whether

this is possible, and therefore I fear that we may have to seek victory rather than peace. But as the measures required are exactly the same in either case, the issue can be left to the future. If the preponderant strength of the Western Powers can be made obvious to the Soviet Government, there may be peace; if not, there will be war, probably within a few years.

To sum up, in conclusion, what has been said earlier: if there is war, the destruction, especially in our own country, will probably very greatly exceed what happened in the last war. But I have little doubt that, in the end, the side led by the United States will be victorious. When that happens, it is probable that a single military government will be established over the whole world, and that, therefore, great wars will cease. Provided the necessity for such a single government is adequately realized, mankind may, after the next war, enter upon a period of unexampled peace and prosperity. The future is not all dark: there is a gloomy tunnel to be traversed, but beyond that a gleam of daylight begins to be visible.

ANGUS WILSON

CRAZY CROWD

JENNIE leaned forward and touched him on the knee. 'What are you thinking about, darling?' she asked. 'I was thinking about Tuesday,' Peter said. 'It was nice, wasn't it?' said Jennie, and for a moment the memory of being in bed with him filled her so completely that she lay back with her eyes closed and her lips slightly apart. This greatly excited Peter and he felt the presence of the old gentleman in the opposite corner of the carriage as an intolerable intrusion. A moment later she was staring at him, her large dark eyes with their long lashes dwelling on him with that sincere, courageous look that made him worship her so completely. 'All the same, Peter, I wish you didn't have to say Tuesday in that special voice.' 'What should I have said?' he asked nervously. 'I should have thought you could have said "I was thinking how nice it was when we were in bed together" or something like that.' Peter laughed. 'I see what you mean,' he said. 'I wonder if you do.' 'I think so. You prefer to call a spade a spade.' 'No,

'I don't,' said Jennie. 'Spades have nothing to do with it.' She lit a cigarette with an abrupt, angry gesture. 'There's nothing shocking about it. No unpleasant facts to be faced. It's just that I don't like covering over something rather good and pleasant with all that wickedness, that fussing and making it sacred with a special kind of hushed voice. I think that kind of thing clogs up the works.' 'Yes,' said Peter, 'perhaps it does. But isn't it just a convention? Does it mean any more?' 'I think so,' said Jennie. 'I think it does.' She put on her amber-rimmed glasses and took out her Hugo's Italian Course. Peter felt completely sick; he must make it all right with her now or there would be one of those angry storms that he could not bear. 'I do understand what you mean,' he said. 'I just didn't get it for a moment, that was all.' Jennie wrinkled up her nose at him and pressed his hand softly. 'Never mind, why,' she said and smiled, but she went back to her Italian grammar.

Peter longed to say something more, to make sure that everything was all right, but he remembered what Jennie had said to him about wasting time trying to undo things that were done. As he looked at her peering so solemnly at the book in front of her and making notes on a piece of paper from time to time, he felt once more how privileged he was to have won her love. She was so clear-sighted, so firm in her judgements, so tenacious in her application. Here she was learning Italian, and learning it competently, not just playing at it, and all because she intended a visit to Italy some time next year. They had almost quarrelled about it some weeks ago when she had refused to go to Studio One to see the *Palma* film because she had her next lesson to prepare. 'Aren't you being rather goody-goody about all this?' he had said, but she had shown him immediately how false was his perspective. 'No, darling, it's not a question of being good, it's just a matter of thinking ahead a little, being sensible even if it means being a bore sometimes. If I went to Italy without having read something of their literature and without being able to speak adequately I should feel such a fraud.' 'You mean because you would be having something on easy terms that others could appreciate more.' 'No, no,' she had cried, 'damn all that about others, that's just sentimentality. No, I'm thinking of myself, of my own integrity. Peter, surely you can see that one must have some clear picture of one's life in front of one. You can't just grab at pleasure like a greedy

schoolboy, Raimu this evening because I want it, no Italian because I don't. The whole thing would be such an impossible mess.' Then she had leaned over the back of his chair and stroked his hair. 'Listen to me,' she had said, 'talking to you like this, you who have done so much with your life even at twenty-seven, fighting that dismal Baptist background, winning scholarships, getting a First, being an officer in His Majesty's Navy and now being an A.P. at the Ministry and a jolly good A.P. too. That's really the trouble, you've read everything, you know all the languages, I don't. Be patient with me, darling, be patient with my ignorance.' She had paused for a moment, frowning, then she had added, 'Not that I think you should ever stop learning. The trouble is, you know, that you've got swallowed up by the Ministry. Town Planning is a wonderful thing but it isn't enough for someone like you, you need something creative in your leisure time too.' Of course he realized that she was right, he had fallen into the habit of thinking that he could rest on his laurels. There had been so much activity in the past few years, constant examinations, adapting himself to new situations, new strata of society, first Cambridge, then the Navy, and now the Ministry and life in London; he had begun to think that he could rest for a bit and just have fun, provided he did his job properly. But Jennie had seen through that. It wasn't as if she could not have fun, too, when she wanted it, and in a far more abandoned, less inhibited way than he could ever manage, but she had a sense of balance, had not been thrown out of gear by the war. And so he had promised to resume his University research work on the *Pléiade*.

Peter opened the new book on Du Bellay and read a few pages, but somehow with Jennie sitting opposite he could not concentrate and he began to stare out of the window. Already the train was moving through the flats of Cambridgeshire: an even yellow surface of grass after the summer's heat, cut by the crisscross of streams with their thick rushes and pollarded willows; only occasionally did the eye find a focal point—the hard black and white of some Frisians pasturing, the rusty symmetry of a Georgian mansion, the golden billowing of a copse in the September wind, and—marks of creeping urbanization—the wire fences and outhouses of the smallholdings with their shining white geese and goats. It seemed strange to think that Jennie's home which she had painted in such warm, happy, even, if the word had

not been debased, cosy colours should lie among such plain, almost deadening landscape. But as Peter gazed longer he began to feel that there was a dependability, an honest good sense about these levels that was much what he admired so in her, and perhaps as she had built that brilliant, gay, attractive nature upon plain and good foundation, so the Cockshotts had created their home alive, bright, happy-go-lucky, 'crazy', Jennie had often described it, upon this sensible land. He tried to picture her family from the many things she had said about them. His own home background was so different that he found it difficult to follow her warm, impulsive description of her childhood. Respect for parents, he understood, and acceptance of the recognized forms and ceremonies or else rebellion from them, but he had been far too busy winning scholarships and passing examinations to attempt the intimate undertones, the almost emotional companionship of which Jennie spoke, nor would his parents, with their austere conceptions of filial obedience tempered only by their ambitions for his future, have understood or encouraged such overtures. He felt greatly drawn to the easy familiarity that she had described, yet much afraid that her family would not like him. It was clear that the only course was to maintain a friendly silence and trust to Jennie to interpret as she had done so often in London. Her affection for her father was deep and he imagined it was reciprocated. Indeed, the wealthy barrister who had retired from the law so early sounded a most attractive gentle creature, with his love of the country, his local antiquarianism and his great artistic integrity which had caused him to publish so little, to polish and polish as he aimed at perfection. A survival, of course, but a lovable and amusing person; Peter's only fear was that he would fail to grasp the many leisured-class hypotheses by which Mr. Cockshott obviously lived, but there again Jennie had explained so much. Her stepmother, Nan, remained more vague. Some children, certainly, would have resented the intrusion of an American woman into their home, but Jennie and her brother had apparently completely accepted Nan, though there were clearly things in her that Jennie felt difficult to assimilate, for she often said laughingly that her stepmother had on such and such an occasion been 'rather pathetically Yankee'. Thinking of the garrulous, over-earnest American academical women he had known, Peter had thought this an unpleasant condemnation; but his

acquaintance was very limited, and Jennie had explained that Southerners were quite different, 'awfully English really, only with an extra chic for which any English girl would sell her all'. Peter thought that perhaps Nan might be a little alarming, but obviously very worth while. Then there was Jennie's brother Hamish who had been her companion in all those strange, happy fantasy games of her childhood. She had explained carefully that he was not an intellectual, but that he was very learned in country lore and had read all sorts of out-of-the-way books on subjects that interested him. Jennie admired him because he had hammered out ideas for himself in so many different spheres—had his own philosophy of life and his own views on art and politics. Some of these views sounded strangely crazy to Peter, and perhaps a bit cocksure, but still he was only twenty-two and, as Jennie had pointed out, views didn't matter when one was young, what really counted was thinking for oneself. It would be necessary to go very easy with a fellow like that, Peter reflected, thinking of his own obstinate defence of heterodox ideas at that age; it had been mostly due to shyness, he remembered. And lastly there was Flopsy, who was some sort of cousin, though he could never unravel the exact relationship. She was certainly somebody outside his former experience, not that he was unused to the presence of elderly unmarried female relations in the homes of family friends, but their activities were always confined to household matters, women's gossip or good works. This Flopsy was a much more positive character, for not only did she run the household, and with such a happy-go-lucky family she must be kept very busy, but she appeared also to be the confidante of all their troubles. The extent to which even someone so self-reliant as Jennie depended upon her advice was amazing, but she was obviously a rare sort of person. He felt that he already knew and liked her from the many stories he had heard of her downright tongue, her great commonsense and her sudden frivolities. He only hoped that he would not fall too much below her idea of the ideal suitor, but at least he felt that so shrewd and honest a woman would see through his awkwardness to his deep love for Jennie. Anyhow, he decided, if anything went wrong it would only be his own fault, for it was really a privilege to be meeting such unusual people who were yet so simple and warm-hearted, above all it was a great privilege to be meeting Jennie's family.

As she stepped from the carriage on to the little country platform Jennie looked back for a moment at her lover. 'Frightened, Darling?' she asked and as Peter nodded assent, 'There's no earthly need,' she said. 'I'm pretty certain you'll approve of them and I know they'll love you. Anyhow, anyone who fails to make the grade will have to reckon with me. So you've been warned,' she ended with mock severity. A sudden gust of wind blew from behind her as she stood on the platform, causing her to hold tightly to the little red straw hat perched precariously on her head, blowing the thick, dark wavy hair in strands on which the sun played, moulding her cherry and white flowered dress to her slender figure, underlining the beauty of her long, well-shaped legs. It gave a moment's sharp desire to Peter that made him fear the discomfort of the week-end, doubt his ability to keep their mutual bond that parental feelings were to be respected, love-making forsworn. But desire could not endure, already they had been claimed by Nan. 'Honey,' she cried in her soft Southern drawl, throwing her arms round Jennie's neck. 'Honey, it's good to see you. I know it's only a week, but it's seemed like an age.' 'Darling Nan,' cried Jennie, and her embrace was almost that of a little girl, as she kicked her feet up behind her. 'Darling Nan, this is Peter. Peter, this is Nan.' The sunburnt, florid face, with its upturned, freckled nose turned to Peter, the blue eyes gazed steadily at him, then Nan broke into a broad, good-natured smile, the wide, loose mouth parting to reveal even, white teeth. She gave Peter's hand a hearty shake. 'My! this is a good moment,' she said. 'A very good moment.' Then she turned again to Jennie, holding her at arm's length. 'You look awfully pale, dear,' she said. 'I hate to think of you up there in those dreadful smoky streets, and it's been so lovely here. We have the most beautiful autumns here, Peter.' 'They're the same as autumns anywhere else, darling,' said Jennie. 'That they're not,' said Nan. 'Everything's kind of special round here. You just wait till you see our trees, Peter, great splendid red and gold creatures. I'd better warn you I shan't like you at all if you don't fall in love with our countryside. But I know you will, you're no townsman, not with those powerful shoulders. I like your Peter,' she said to Jennie. 'There you are, darling, she likes you.' 'Well, for heaven's sake, look at that,' cried Nan. 'Hamish hasn't moved out of the car', and she pointed at a tall, dark-haired young man whose legs

seemed to fill the back of the grey car towards which they were advancing. It gave Peter a shock to see Jennie's eyes staring from a man's face. He felt the moment had come to be positive. 'Hallo, Hamish,' he said with what he hoped was a friendly smile, but the young man ignored him. 'That's a revolting dress,' he said to Jennie, in a mumble that came from behind his pipe. 'Not so revolting as a green tie with a blue shirt,' said his sister. 'Really, darling, you need me here to take your colour sense in hand.' 'Parkinson's wife's been took again, and it's a mercy she come through, what with being her eighth and born with a hump like a camel,' said Hamish. 'Never,' said Jennie, 'and her such a good woman! What be they callin' "the little 'un"? 'They don't give 'er no name,' said Hamish, 'for fear she be bewitched.' 'Appen it'll be so,' said Jennie. 'For heaven's sake, you two,' said Nan. 'What will Peter think of you? Aren't they the craziest pair? Look at poor Peter standing there wondering what sort of place he's come to.' Peter endeavoured to explain that he understood them to be imitating rustics, but Nan would not allow him to comprehend. 'My dear, there's no need to hide it from me. I know exactly what you're thinking. "Whatever made me come down to this crazy place among these crazy people?" And so they are—the crazy Cockshotts. My dear,' she called to Jennie in the back of the car, 'it's going to be the most terrible picnic. I've just not thought a thing about what to eat or what to drink, so Heaven knows what you'll find, children.' 'Never mind, darling,' called Jennie, 'the Lord will provide.' 'He'd better,' said Nan, 'or I'll never go to that awful old church again.' To Peter sitting in front with her it seemed that Nan never ceased speaking for the whole nine miles of their drive to the house. He could not help feeling that in her garrulity she was much like other American women, but he felt sure that he was missing some quality through his own obtuseness. He found it easy enough to answer her innumerable questions, for a murmur of assent was all she required; her sudden changes, however, from talk about the village and rationing or praise of the countryside to a more intimate note confused him greatly. 'I do hope you're going to like us,' she said, fixing him with her honest blue eyes, to the great detriment of her driving, 'because I know we're going to like you very, very much.' As a background to Nan's slow drawl he could hear a constant conversation in varying degrees of rustic

accent, coming from the back of the car, sometimes giving place to giggles from Jennie and great guffaws from Hamish, sometimes to horseplay in which wrestling and hair-pulling were followed by shrieks of laughter. Only twice did the two conversations merge. 'Jennie,' called Nan once, 'you never told me Peter was a beautiful young man. He's beautiful.' 'Nan, Nan, don't say it. You'll make him conceited,' said Jennie. 'I can't help it,' said Nan. 'If I see anything beautiful, whether it's trees or flowers or a lovely physique I just have to say so.' 'He's certainly better than Jennie's last young man,' said Hamish, 'the one with spavins and a cauliflower ear. Peter's ears appear to be of normal size.' 'We pride ourselves on our ears in my family,' said Peter, trying to join in the fun, but Hamish was intent on his own act. 'Then there was the young dental mechanic, a charming fellow, indeed brilliant as dental mechanics go, but unfortunately he smelt. You don't smell, do you?' he called to Peter. 'Don't be rude, Hamish,' said Jennie, and Nan chimed in with 'Now, Hamish, you're just being horrible and coarse.' 'Ah, I forgot,' said Hamish, 'the susceptibilities of the great bourgeoisie, no reference must ever be made to the effects of the humours of the human body upon the olfactory nerves. Peter, I apologize.' Luckily Peter was not called upon to reply, for Nan directed his attention to a Queen Anne house. 'My! what a shame,' she said, 'the Piggotts are from home. I know you'd just adore the Piggotts. They're the most wonderful old English family. They've lived in that lovely old house for generations, but to meet them they're the simplest folk imaginable. Why! old Sir Charles looks just like a dear old farmer . . .' and she continued happily to discourse on the necessary interdependence of good breeding and simplicity, occasionally adding remarks to the effect that having roots deep in the countryside was what really mattered. Suddenly she paused and shouting over her shoulder to Jennie she called, 'My dear, the most awful thing! I quite forgot to tell you we've all got to go to the Bogush-Smiths to tea.' 'Oh, Nan, no!' cried Jennie. 'Not the Bogus-S's.' 'We always call them the Bogus-Smiths,' said Nan by way of explanation, 'they're a terrible vulgar family that comes from Heaven knows where. They've got the most lovely old place, a darling old eighteenth-century flower house, but they've just ruined it. They've made it all old-world, of course they just haven't got any taste. Don't you agree, Peter, that vulgarity is the most dreadful of the Deadly Sins?'

Peter murmured assent. 'I knew you would,' said Nan. 'I wish you could see Mrs. Bogush-Smith gardening in all her rings. I just hate to see hands in a garden when they don't really belong to the soil. The awful thing is, Jennie,' she added, 'that everything grows there. I suppose,' she ended with a sigh, 'people just have green fingers or they haven't.' 'The Bogus-S's have *money*,' said Hamish, 'and a sense of the power of money, that's what I like about them. If the people who really belong to the land are effete and weak and humane, then let those who have money and are prepared to use it ruthlessly take over. I can respect the Bogus-Smiths' vulgarity, it's strong. When I'm with them it's gloves off. Mr. Bogus-S. sweats his workmen and Mrs. Bogus-S. her servants but they've got what they want. I like going there, it's a clash of wills, my power against theirs.' 'Hamish is crazy on Power,' said Nan explaining again. 'Very well, darling, you shall go and Peter and Jennie can stay at home. The Brashers will be there.' 'Oh, hell,' said Hamish, and Jennie roaring with laughter began to chant

In their own eyes the Brashers
Are all of them dashers
The Boys are all Mashers
And the girls are all smashers.

A chorus in which Hamish joined with a deafening roar, and even Nan hummed the tune. 'The Brashers shall serve my will and that of the Bogus-Smiths,' said Hamish. 'They shall be our helots.' 'Thus spake Zarathustra,' said Jennie with mock gravity. Hamish began to pull her hat off, and had they not turned into the drive at that moment there would have been another wrestling bout.

They approached a long, grey, early Victorian house with a verandah and a row of elegant French windows with olive green shutters. 'Now isn't it just the ugliest house you've ever seen?' asked Nan. Peter thought it had great charm and said so. 'Well, yes,' said Nan, 'the children love it and I suppose it is quaint. But think if it was one of those lovely old red brick Queen Anne farmhouses.' A bent old man in a straw hat was tending a chrysanthemum bed, Jennie began to shout excitedly through the window. 'Mr. Porpentine, darling Mr. Porpentine,' she cried. 'What a curious name,' said Peter, whose mind had indeed begun to wander under the impact of Nan's chatter. 'Oh Peter, darling,

really,' said Jennie. 'It isn't his real name, it's because he's so prickly, you know "the fretful porpentine"'. Only of course he isn't really prickly, he's an old darling.' Further explanations were cut short by their arrival at the front porch. Nan led the way into a high-ceilinged room, into which the sunlight was streaming through the long windows. 'This is the sitting room,' said Nan. 'It's in the most terrible mess. But at least it is human, it's lived in.' And lived in it clearly was—to an unfamiliar visitor like Peter the room appeared like a chart of some crowded group of islands, deep armchairs and sofas in a faded flowered cretonne stood but a few feet from each other, and where the bewildered navigator might hope to pass between them there was always some table or stool to bar his way. Movement was made the more dangerous because some breakable object was balanced precariously on every available flat surface. There were used plates and unused plates, half-finished dishes of sandwiches, half-empty cups of coffee, ashtrays standing days deep in cigarette ends; even the family photographs on the mantelpiece seemed to be pushing half-finished glasses of beer over the edge. It was impossible to sit down, for the chairs and sofas were filled with books, sewing, work-boxes, unfolded newspapers and in one case a tabby cat and two pairs of pliers. When at last some spaces were cleared the chair springs groaned and creaked beneath the weight of their sitters. Peter sank into a chair of which the springs were broken, hitting the calves of his legs against an unsuspected wooden edge. It was clear that the chairs and sofas were each the favourite of some member of the family, had indeed been over-long lived in.

'My dears,' said Nan, 'I'm ashamed', and she waved her hand towards a plate of unfinished veal and ham pie that was placed on the 'poof'. 'Suicide Sal's away and we've been picnicking.' 'Oh, I'm so disappointed,' cried Jennie. 'I had so wanted Peter to see Suicide Sal.' 'My dear, she's had another accident.' 'Tis Jim Tomlin 'ave got 'er into trouble this time,' said Hamish. 'They to say she be minded to throw 'erself in pond.' 'Oh! Hamish, don't be so dreadful,' said Nan and she began to repeat the story of her servant problems that Peter had heard in the car. Suddenly the door opened and a little birdlike elderly woman in a neat grey skirt and coat seemed almost to hop into the room. She had a face of faded prettiness with kitten eyes, but at this moment her lips were compressed, her forehead wrinkled, and she was pushing

back a wisp of grey hair with a worried gesture. 'Oh, Nan, there you are at last,' she said. 'I just can't get that lemon meringue pie of yours right. The oven won't come down and I'm sure the wretched thing will burn.' 'Flopsy,' cried Jennie and 'How's my canary bird?' said Flopsy as they embraced. 'Flopsy, this is Peter.' 'How do you do?' said Flopsy. 'You're taller than I expected and thinner. That young man of yours needs feeding, Jennie. Well, Peter or no Peter he won't get any dinner tonight if we don't look after that pie. Come on, Nan.' 'Happy, darling?' asked Jennie. Peter was too exhausted to do more than smile, but alone with her he felt he could do so sincerely. 'Good,' she said, then 'Where can Daddy be?' she asked and began to call 'Dads, Dads, where are you?' Mr. Cockshott was a much smaller man than Peter had expected. Despite his bald head fringed with grey and his grey toothbrush moustache he had a boyish, almost Puckish expression which made him seem younger than his fifty-seven years. He wore an old, shapeless tweed suit with bulging pockets and a neat grey foulard bow tie. 'Jennie, darling, you're looking very pretty,' he said, kissing her on the forehead, as she sat on the sofa, and running his hand over her hair. 'Dads,' said Jennie, 'darling Dads. This is Peter.' 'So you're the brave man who's had the temerity to take on this little wretch,' said Mr. Cockshott. 'It doesn't require much courage,' said Peter, 'the reward is so great.' 'Good, good,' said Mr. Cockshott absently. 'How are things at the Ministry? Humming, I suppose.' It was the first question about himself that anyone had asked Peter and he was about to answer when Mr. Cockshott went on. 'Of course they are. I never yet heard of a Government Office where things were *not* humming. Though what they're humming about is rather a different question, eh? Well, you'll find things very quiet down here. Not but what there's been a deal of trouble about Abbot Gladwin's yearly returns. These mortmain tenures are liable to cause a rumpus you know,' he said turning to Jennie. 'It's not like a simple scutage where the return is a plain per capitem. Between you and me the Abbot's had a lot of trouble with his *own* tenants. I'm by no means sure that Dame Alice hasn't suppressed a pig or two and as for Richard the Smith, frankly the man's a liar.' 'Darling, don't mystify Peter. He's talking about his old twelfth century, Peter. Have you had a reply from the Record Office yet, darling?' 'Yes,' said Mr. Cockshott. 'Most unsatisfactory. Of course it was

turbulent century, Barrett,' he said to Peter, 'and the turbulence was not without repercussions even in our remote part of the world. For instance I've been able to relate the impact of Richard Coeur de Lion's ransom directly to . . .' But there he was interrupted by the return of Nan. 'For heaven's sake, Gordon,' she said, 'just look at you. You dreadful, disreputable creature. I appeal to you, Peter, doesn't he look just like the wrong end of a salvage campaign? I can't imagine what that starchy Mrs. Brasher will say if she sees you.' 'If Mrs. Brasher does see me, and considering her myopic tendencies I consider that very unlikely, she will undoubtedly, as the current phrase goes, fall for me.' 'Maybe, dear, maybe,' said Nan, 'but nevertheless your trousers are going to get a patch in them. Flopsy,' she called, 'Flopsy, bring needle and help sew up Gordon's pants.' 'Poor Dads!' said Jennie 'aren't you shockingly bullied? Cross my heart, spit on my finger,' she added, 'I'll never treat my man like this virago' and she pressed Nan's elbow tenderly. Peter smiled uneasily and uncrossed his legs. But Mr. Cockshott was purring as a buzz of feminine interest surrounded him. 'I'll tell you a secret, Barrett,' he said. 'Women are like touchy collie dogs, they need humouring.' Peter was about to reply in what he felt to be a suitable man-to-man vein, when he was startled by finding a large bodkin thrust into his left hand. 'Hold that,' said Flopsy, 'and don't sit gaping.' The kindness that lay behind her gruff voice was almost unbearable. 'You'll have to learn to be useful if you want to earn your bread and butter in this house. No drones here.' 'Oh, for crying out loud,' said Nan. 'Flopsy, you're scaring the poor boy into fits.' 'Peter's not frightened, are you, darling?' said Jennie. 'Why, it didn't take him any time to see how much Flopsy's bark meant.' Peter laughed and tried to smile at Flopsy. 'I shan't eat you up, young man,' she said. But Mr. Cockshott was growing restive, his face took on an expression of caricatured thoughtfulness and he bit on his pipe. 'Of course, I might appear with no trousers at all,' he said. 'Aesthetically I should be perfectly justified, for I still have a very fine leg. Hygienically—well, the weather is very warm and trousers are an undesirable encumbrance. Socially I make my own laws. I have only one hesitation and that is in the moral sphere. I have no doubt at all that the sight of my splendid limbs would cause Mrs. Brasher to become discontented with her own spouse's spindly shanks; and whilst I have the greatest contempt

for that horse-toothed, henpecked gentleman, I have also the highest respect for the institution of marriage. No, I must remain a martyr to the cause of public morality.' A chorus of laughter greeted this sally and Nan declared he was impossible, whilst Jennie dared him to carry out his threats. 'Oh do, Dads, do,' she cried. 'I'd so adore to see Mrs. Brasher's face. Go on, I dare you.' But Dads just shook his head. 'Flopsy shall make me a kilt in the long winter evenings,' he declared. 'I'll make you a bag to put your head in if you don't stand still while I'm patching you,' said Flopsy, laughing. 'Heathenish woman, how right they were to give you that outlandish name.' 'It's not an outlandish name,' said Jennie, 'Flopsy's a lovely name. It comes from the Flopsy Bunnies in "Peter Rabbit".' 'It does not,' said Hamish, entering the room. 'It is taken from the immortal English Surrealist, Edward Lear, and his Mopsikon-Flopsikon bear.' After what seemed to Peter an age the family were ready to depart, he would not have dared to confess to Jennie his relief as he heard the car disappear down the drive.

Despite all Nan's apologies that the evening meal was just a picnic, Peter decided that they lived very well; with the combined produce of the garden, neighbouring farms and American relations it was clear that austerity had not seriously touched them. Sweet corn and tunny fish was followed by roast chicken, and the meal ended with open apple tart and lemon meringue pie. Everybody ate very heartily, whilst deploring the hard times in which they lived. To Mr. Cockshott no regime could be called civilized that compelled a discriminating palate to take beer rather than wine with dinner. Hamish was unable to see what else could result from a sentimental system designed to level down. Flopsy suspected that to get decent food it would soon be necessary to descend the mines, where she had no doubt that caviare and foie gras were being consumed hourly. Nan adored the farmhouse simplicity of it all and had always wanted to live on such wholesome fare, but she deplored the disappearance of the old English hospitality which scarcity compelled. Jennie with one eye on Peter remained silent, but in face of such unaccustomed plenty Peter was in no critical mood. Indeed, as he sat in an armchair with a cup of Nan's excellent American coffee and a glass of cointreau unearthed by Mr. Cockshott from his treasure house, he did not even feel alarmed that he had been left alone with Hamish. For

a time there was silence as Hamish looked at the evening paper gloomily, then quite suddenly he said 'Well, we've reached the final point of fantasy. Vitiates the minds or what pass for the minds of the people with education, teach them to read and write, feed their imaginations with sexual and criminal fantasies known as films, and then starve them in order to pay for these delightful erotic celluloids. *Circenses* without *panem* it seems.' 'Yes,' said Peter, 'it's pretty bad. I don't suppose anyone would be the worse for the disappearance of a lot of the films we get from America. But you tend to forget perhaps the routine nature of so many jobs today, people need recreation and some emotional outlet.' 'I don't accept industrialization as an excuse for anything,' said Hamish. 'We made the machines, we can get rid of them. People seem to forget that our wills are still free. As to recreation, that died out with village life. I don't know quite what you mean by emotional outlet, judging by most films I take it you refer to sexual intercourse, there I'm old-fashioned enough to believe that marriage for the purposes of procreation is still quite an intelligent answer. But if you mean the need for something not purely material, some exercise of the sense of awe, you people killed that when you killed church going.' Peter laughed and denied that he was responsible for the decline in church congregations. 'Do you go to church?' said Hamish. 'No,' said Peter. 'I suppose I incline to agnosticism in religion.' 'You incline to agnosticism,' said Hamish scornfully, 'which means, I suppose, that you prefer to believe the latest miracle performed by some B.Sc. London to the authority of two thousand years.' 'I don't think the divergence of science and religion is quite the issue nowadays,' said Peter as calmly as he could manage. 'After all so many modern physicists are by no means hostile to religious belief.' 'Very kind of them, I'm sure,' said Hamish. 'In any case I was not talking about what the B.B.C. calls "belief in God", that is not a thing for discussion really. I was talking of church-going. The greatest dereliction of duty in an irresponsible age is the failure of the educated and propertied classes to set an example by attending their parish churches.' 'You would hardly advocate attendance at church by non-believers.' 'My dear fellow,' said Hamish, 'all this talk about belief or non-belief is rather crude. A Roman gentleman might privately be a Stoic or an Epicurean, but that didn't prevent him from performing his duty to his country by sacrificing to the

gods. We have privileges and we must act accordingly by setting an example to our inferiors.' 'I think,' said Peter angrily, 'that that view is crazy as well as unchristian.' 'Yes,' said Hamish, 'so does the *Sunday Express*. I think that the only dignified approach to the modern world is to be classed as crazy.' Further acrimony was prevented by the appearance of Mr. Cockshott with some papers and Hamish retired. 'Where has Jennie gone?' asked Peter rather restively. 'In these unhallowed times,' said Mr. Cockshott, 'even the fairest of women have to partake in the household duties, in short the women of the house are assisting cook with the washing up.' 'But can't I help?' asked Peter. 'Good heavens, my dear boy. No. Let us retain some of the privileges of our sex. Jennie tells me you have a taste for literature, so I've brought you a few occasional writings of mine for a little light bedside reading.' Peter took the offprints with a sincere interest. 'I should very much like to read them,' he said. 'Thank you,' said Mr. Cockshott, 'thank you. I project a longer work—a history of North Cambridgeshire which will be at once, I hope, a scholarly account of the changing institutions and a work of literary value and entertainment describing the social scene with its quaint everyday characters and customs. Unfortunately, my position as a J.P. and a local landlord, though only, of course, on a small scale, leaves me less time for writing than I should like. In any case I am not one who is content with information without style. That's why I'm afraid I quarrel with our good neighbours the Cambridge Fellows. I find most of their painstaking researches quite unreadable, but then I'm neither a pedagogue nor a pedant. On the other hand, though I believe that imagination must infuse the pages of history if they are to live, I could not write what is known as the popular historical biography. I have too much sense of accuracy and too little interest in the seamy side of the past to do that, nor have I the requisite standard of vulgarity in my writing. In fact I'm rather a fish out of water, a fact that is always brought home to me when I attend the meetings of historical or antiquarian societies.' It seemed to Peter that Mr. Cockshott talked for hours about the various quarrels he had engaged in with eminent historians and authors, he began to feel more and more drowsy and the desire to be with Jennie, to touch and feel her, became stronger and stronger. At last the door was opened and Nan appeared. 'Oh! Gordon,' she said, 'look at poor Peter, he's so tired and white. You want to go to bed, don't you?'

I am rather tired after the journey,' said Peter, but he hastened to add 'It's all been awfully interesting and I'm very much looking forward to reading these articles'.

As he walked along the corridor to his room he passed an open door of another bedroom. Inside two figures were locked in each other's arms. He went quickly and, he hoped, silently past. He told himself that he had always known how tremendously fond Jennie was of her brother, but all the same the droop of her body and the force of Hamish's embrace troubled him much that night.

Peter sat in a deck chair after breakfast the next morning attempting to read Mr. Cockshott's account of the Black Death in Little Fromling, but he could not attend to the essay. He felt tired and irritable, for he had slept very poorly. He found himself wondering where Jennie had gone, she had slipped away after breakfast to make the beds, promising to join him in a few minutes, and now nearly an hour had passed. He decided to go and look for her. He found Mr. Cockshott in the morning room writing letters. 'Do you know where Jennie is?' he asked. 'Ah, where indeed?' said Mr. Cockshott. 'That's what I'm always asking when she's here at the week-ends. I never seem to see anything of her. We're all a bit jealous over Jennie. But her independence is part of her charm. She will be free, she won't be monopolized.' 'I had no intention of monopolizing her. I just wanted to talk to her, that's all.' 'My dear boy, I quite understand your feelings and it's very naughty of her to have left her guest like this. But we're either a crazy family, lacking in the conventions, or rather perhaps I should say we make our own.' Peter decided to seek her elsewhere. He went upstairs to his bedroom, there he found Flopsy making the bed. 'You can't come up to your room now,' said Flopsy. 'The chambermaid's at work.' 'I was looking for Jennie.' 'Well, you mustn't look like an angry dog, you'll never tell Jennie that way. You like her a lot, don't you?' 'I'm very fond of Jennie,' said Peter, 'very fond indeed.' 'Good heavens! I should hope so and more. Any man in his senses would be head over heels about Jennie. But there,' she added, 'I'm partial.' But he obviously did not think so. 'If it's any satisfaction to you,' said Peter savagely, 'I'm in love with Jennie and that's why I want to see her.' 'Good for you,' said Flopsy. 'But don't bite my head off. The Cockshotts are a crazy crowd, you know, you can't drive us. Well, now be off, I must make this bed.' Peter wandered out into

the garden where he found Nan in an old waterproof and a battered felt hat making a bonfire. 'Have you seen Jennie?' he asked. 'Oh, Peter,' she said, 'has she left you on your own? No! that's too bad. But there you are, that's the Cockshotts all over, they're completely crazy.' 'Don't you find it rather a strain?' asked Peter. 'Maybe at first I did a little, but they're so natural and simple. I love that way of living.' For a moment she looked away from him: 'They do ask rather a lot from people,' she said, and her voice sounded for the first time sincere. A moment later her blue eyes were looking at him with that frank, open stare which he was beginning to mistrust. 'It's not that really, it's just that they ask a lot of life. You see they're big people and big people are often kind of strange to understand.' She laid her hand on Peter's arm. 'Go see if she's in the Tree House,' she said. 'It's a kind of funny old place she and Hamish made when they were kids and they still love it. It's down at the end of the garden by the little wood.'

Jennie and Hamish were sitting on a wooden platform up in an elm tree when Peter found them. They were practising tying knots in a piece of rope. Peter's anger must have shown itself for Jennie called out 'Welcome, darling, welcome to the Tree House. You ought to make three salaams before you're allowed in, but we'll let you off this time, won't we, Hamish?' 'Certainly,' said Hamish, who also appeared anxious to placate Peter. 'I thought you went to church on Sunday mornings,' said Peter. 'Everything must give way to the hospitality due to friends,' said Hamish with a charming smile. 'There was no need to have stayed away for me.' 'Now, Peter,' said Jennie, 'that's rude after Hamish has been so nice.' 'We ought to saw some logs,' said Hamish. 'Would you like to give a hand?' 'Oh, yes, do let's,' said Jennie. 'You and Peter can take the double saw, and I'll do the small branches.'

Peter did not find it very easy to keep up to Hamish's pace, he got very hot and out of breath, the sawdust kept flying in his face and the teeth of the saw stuck suddenly in the knots of wood so that they were both violently jolted. 'I say,' said Hamish, 'I don't think you're very good at this. Perhaps we'd better stop.' 'No,' said Jennie who was angry at Peter's inefficiency, 'certainly not. It does Peter good to do things he's not good at.' Peter immediately let go of his end of the saw so that it swung sharply round almost cutting off Hamish's arm. 'Bloody hell,' said Hamish, bu

Peter took no notice, he strode rapidly away down the path through the little copse. Jennie ran after him. 'Good heavens,' Peter, she called, 'Whatever is the matter? Don't be such an idiot. Just because I said it was good for you to go on sawing and so it would have been.' 'It's a great deal more than that,' said Peter tensely, 'as you'd see if you weren't blind with love of your family.' 'Darling, what has upset you? Surely you aren't annoyed with Hamish, why, he's only a child.' 'I'm well aware of that,' said Peter. 'A vain, spoilt child to be petted and fussed one minute and bullied and ordered about the next. And your father's just as bad. Well, I don't want a lot of women petting and bullying me, not Nan, nor your beloved Flopsy, no, nor even you.' 'Peter, you're crazy.' 'Good God! I'm trying only to live up to your family. I've had it ever since I arrived: "The Crazy Cockshotts" and bloody proud of it. I've had it from you and your father, from Flopsy and from Nan, wretched woman, she ought to know all about it, and I've had it from your Fascist brother. You're all a damned sight too crazy for me to live up to.' Jennie was getting quite out of breath, trying to keep up with Peter's increasing pace. Suddenly she flung herself down in the thick bracken at the side of the path. 'Stop! Peter, stop!' she called. Peter stood still over her and she stretched out her hand to him, pulling him down on top of her. Her mouth pressed tightly to his, and her hands stroked his hair, his arms, his back, soothing and caressing him. Gradually his anger died from him and the tension relaxed as in his turn he held her to him.

ROBIN IRONSIDE BALTHUS

THERE has been, as yet, no plain sign that the school of Paris has retained, since the war, any of that attractive power of self-refreshment whose radiations, during the peace, proved a source of energy to which the painters of all Europe continually resorted. It seemed then that the productions of Paris were too rich and protean to be qualified, without unfair disparagement, as the manifestation of a school. But we can now see that the term, for general purposes, is an accurate one. The art to which, in this case,

it refers, with its blend of Fauvist and Cubist elements, with its obviously Cézannesque insignia, has, with age, acquired a recognizable general character. But even more than the lapse of years, the Byzantinism in which it is now apparently ensnared, justifies, almost in a narrow sense, its description as a school. Unofficial, independent and libertarian in its origins, it has become official, dependent and captive in its decline. We might suppose that its mortified features must be marketed by experts, if they are to be diffused, and displayed in museums, if they are to be respected. The living achievements of its great native protagonists have been enshrined. We have received enough and we expect no more from their genius. Expectancy is focused not on the French but upon those foreigners who were drawn by the irresistible light of Parisian art while its rays were still brightest, upon Picasso, Miró or Ernst. The 'new' painters whose works are now featured in the commercial galleries are for the most part bleak ritualists—such as Pignon, Fougerson, Tal Coat or Chastel—sounding, with growing loudness and diminishing harmony, notes sufficiently played upon by the Fauves or struck more recently, with perfect stridency, by Picasso. Pictures by the same artists complete the survey of twentieth-century French painting in the new Musée de l'Art Moderne. In that huge emporium, which exhaustingly supplies the requirements of the historian, but must affront any more sensuous, not to say spiritual, needs, it would be impossible to deny the conventional character of the latest exhibits. The art of Balthus is not shown among them and, indeed, its presence there might look like the profanation of an orthodoxy. Balthus, who was born in 1908, is a painter who owes much to the traditions of modern Parisian art, but he is not a purveyor of school pieces; and the post-war affirmation of his young and original gifts promotes the wishful thought that the atrophy of the advertised style may be a fabricated phenomenon, that it may be still too soon, after a total war, to judge the prosperity of an art that could hardly recruit strength under the exactions of occupation and conscription.

Balthus, happily, was never a student at any art school. It is a modern commonplace that the poetic faculty cannot be acquired by study, yet, though painting has no agreed public functions, though the best modern painters have been concerned with communicating mysteries to initiates, and though the hermetic quality of

fine art is not today wrapped in veils of equivocal intelligibility, intending painters are still encouraged to learn their art in schools. Here, at an age when they must be inclined to emulate in some degree the appointed authorities in their chosen profession, they may acquire some useful mechanical knowledge; but they will certainly be stuffed with precepts, potent, possibly, in the minds of their teachers, but not necessarily of the slightest value elsewhere. Where it is a question of fine art as opposed to applied art, schools devoted exclusively to the training of painters for the production of works of art are of negligible, if not of ill-omened, significance. The issue cannot be romantically dismissed by asserting that genius is innate and must succeed in expressing itself whatever adverse influences or hostile principles it may absorb during its period of growth. There is no evidence that talent is either the pure gift of nature or inevitably supported by a strength of character sufficient to resist even the mild rigours or faint blandishments of an approved curriculum. The freedom from any pedagogy in which Balthus developed his gifts was a precious privilege which without doubt warmed and sheltered the growth of that poetic tremor which animates the formal quietism of his mature compositions. He has been able to distil, without deforming, early emotional impressions upon which he might have learnt, under the direct guidance of masters, to look askance; preserved inviolate in some secret compartment of the mind, these impressions have been renewed in recollection with a grace and a profundity denied the innocent hour of their original impact. His pictures have become the vehicle of a private gnosis, and their value resides in their power to impress us with the singularity, the exegetical magic of its terms. They are, however, unimpaired by any monstrous endeavour to produce a novelty—monstrous because any evasion of the life-giving influences of the art of the past is a wasteful task and must prove a vain one. The parents of Balthus were both painters, and he was brought up in a circle of family friends of which Bonnard, Derain and Marquet were intimate members. The effect of those simplifications of natural form cultivated by Fauvism in the interests of more emphatic composition is evident in his earlier work, and lingers in his recent pictures bestowing an air of gravity upon his figures rather than assisting the rhythm of his design; and his landscape vision is under a regular obligation to the example of Courbet's full and frank

dealings with the rocks and forests of the Franche-Comté. We are entitled to judge the painting of Balthus as, with all its other differences, superior to the arid exercises of the official independent school, not because it is, or could be, without ancestry, but because it has so modified, handled and combined the terminology of art as to reflect the specific flavour of an individuality.

Balthus began to paint in infancy, and became aware at about the age of sixteen of his serious vocation to do so. But it was not until after the interruption, lasting two years, of a period of military service spent in Morocco that the sources of his mature inspiration took possession of him. Exile in such surroundings may have driven his imagination towards the darkness of northern Europe, to the house of his childhood and its old, eloquent furniture, and may, with most insistence, have evoked the images of early loves, 'écolières des anciens pensionnats'. Such are now the recurrent themes of his art, themes whose eternal depths he was first seen to have amply explored in the exhibition at the Galerie des Beaux Arts in 1946. The muse whose luminous figure guides us in these recesses is a sister of Clara d'Ellébeuse, obscurely conscious of her sex, waiting in an uneasy trance upon the half-known issue of an unwonted solitude, and always seen, whether playing alone at cards, or dubiously at rest on a settee, or naked before the mirror, through the piercing eyes of a youth hardly more certain than herself that his desires are not a unique experience. She is, like her poetic sister, on holiday from school, on one of those 'propriétés qui produisent encore' where she may climb the trees to nourish her disquiet 'en mangeant des pommes vertes, des noisettes rances'. She is to become, in a subsequent phase of this imaginative remembrance, a bridal influence, 'robed in softened light', a lunar infiltration into the dark, sun-baked sphere of her male companion. And it is, most effectively, amid the furniture and hangings talking to her of her grandmother's youth which they witnessed, that she dreams and ministrates. The painter's recapture of these moods of adolescence has the immediacy of reality, but their poetic essence, in his re-created experience, is immune from the discordant effects of accidental circumstance. The vision is unimpaired, not because the seer was too delicate to tolerate vulgarities, but because he saw the cutting of bread and butter as a ceremony compatible with vaguely conceived dreams of some 'manoir moisissant où devait se passer d'étranges adultères, par les temps



BALTHUS. Les Cerisiers. 1940



Le Salon. 1942



La Patience. 1943



La Chambre. 1948

estes, en Angleterre'. An admirer and illustrator of *Wuthering Heights*, Balthus has found his own conception of an agitated moment of existence to be cast in monumental lines, and we may trust that this natural nobility will not be pared away by too determined a pursuit of the cold dignities of plastic abstraction.

LIONEL TRILLING THE PRINCESS CASAMASSIMA

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

1888, on 2 January, which in any year is likely to be a sad day, Henry James wrote to his friend William Dean Howells that his reputation had been dreadfully injured by his last two novels. The fire for his productions, he said, had been reduced to zero, editors no longer asked for his work, they even seemed ashamed to publish the stories they had already bought. But James was never without courage. 'However, I don't despair,' he wrote, 'for I think I am now really in better form than I ever have been in my life and I propose yet to do many things.' And then, no doubt with the irony all writers use when they dare to speak of future recognition, but also, surely, with the necessary faith, he concludes the matter: 'Very likely, too, some day, all my buried prose will kick off its various tombstones at once.'

And so it happened. The 'some day' has arrived and we have been hearing the clatter of marble as James's buried prose kicks off its monuments in a general resurrection. On all sides James is being given the serious and joyous interest he longed for in his lifetime.

One element of our interest must be the question of how it ever happened that some of James's prose came to be buried at all. It is not hard to understand why certain of James's books did not catch the contemporary fancy. But the two novels on which James placed the blame for his diminishing popularity were *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* and of all James's fictions these are the two which are most likely to make an immediate appeal to the reader of today. That they should not have delighted their contemporary public but, on the contrary, should have

turned it against James, makes a lively problem in the history of taste.¹

In the masterpieces of his late years James became a difficult writer. This is the fact and nothing is gained for James by denying it. He himself knew that these late works were difficult; he wished them to be dealt with as if they were difficult. When a young man from Texas—it was Mr. Stark Young—inquired indirectly of James how he should go about reading his novels, James did not feel that this diffidence was provincial but happily drew up lists which would lead the admirable young man from the easy to the hard. But the hostility with which *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* were received cannot be explained by any difficulty either of manner or intention, for in these books there is none. The prose, although personally characteristic, is perfectly in the tradition of the nineteenth-century novel. It is warm, fluent and on the whole rather less elaborate and virtuose than Dickens' prose. The motives of the characters are clear and direct—certainly they are far from the elaborate punctilio of the late masterpieces. And the charge that is sometimes made against the late work, that it exists in a social vacuum, clearly does not pertain here. In these novels James is at the point in his career at which society, in the largest and even the grossest sense, is offering itself to his mind with great force. He understands society as crowds and police, as a field of justice and injustice, reform and revolution. The social texture of his work is grainy and knotted with practicality and detail. And more: his social observation is of a kind that we must find startlingly prescient when we consider that it was made some sixty years ago.

It is just this prescience, of course, that explains the resistance of James's contemporaries. What James saw he saw truly, but it was not what most of his age-mates were themselves equipped to see. That we now are able to share his vision required the passage of six decades and the events which brought them to climax. Henry James in the '80s understood what we have painfully learned from

¹ Whoever wishes to know what the courage of the artist must sometimes be could do no better than to read the British reviews of *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*. In a single year James brought out two major works; he thought they were his best to date and expected great things of them; he was told by the reviewers that they were not real novels at all; he was scorned and sneered at and condescended to and dismissed. In adjacent columns the ephemeral novels of the day were treated with gentle respect. The American press rivalled the British in the vehemence with which it condemned *The Bostonians*, but it was much more tolerant of *The Princess Casamassima*.

grim glossary of wars and concentration camps, after having in the State and human nature laid open to our horrified inspection. 'But I have the imagination of disaster—and see life as malicious and sinister.' James wrote this to A. C. Benson in 1896 and that so bland a young man as Benson made of the statement, what one then was likely to make of it, is hard to guess. But nowadays we know that such an imagination is one of the keys to truth.

It was then 'the imagination of disaster' that cut James off from his contemporaries and it is what recommends him to us now. We know something about the profound disturbance of the actual life which seems to go along with hypertrophy of the will; how this excess of will seems to be a response to certain adjustments in society and to direct itself back upon them; how D. Lawrence taught us much about this, but Lawrence himself never attempted a more daring conjunction of the sexual and the spiritual life than Henry James succeeds with in *The Bostonians*. We know much about misery and downtroddenness and of what opens when strong and gifted personalities are put at a hopeless disadvantage; and about the possibilities of extreme violence; and about the sense of guilt and unreality which may come to members of the upper classes and of the strange complex efforts they make to find innocence and reality; and of the conflict between the claims of art and of social duty—these are among the themes which make the pattern of *The Princess Casamassima*, a novel which has at its very centre the assumption that Europe has reached the full of its ripeness and is passing over into rottenness, that the peculiarly beautiful light it gives forth is in part the reflection of a glorious past and in part the phosphorescence of a present decay, that it may meet its end by violence and that this is wholly unjust, although never before has the old sinful Continent made so proud and pathetic an assault upon our affections.

II

*Princess Casamassima*¹ belongs to a great line of novels which run through the nineteenth century as, one might say, the very spine of its fiction. These novels, which are defined as a type by the character and circumstance of their heroes, include Balzac's *The Red and the Black*, Balzac's *Père Goriot* and *Lost*

¹ The name is pronounced as if with an awareness of the two Italian words of which it is compounded—CASA MASSIMA, the greatest house.

Illusions, Dickens's *Great Expectations*, Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*; only a very slight extension of the definition is needed allow the inclusion of Tolstoi's *War and Peace* and Dostoievski's *The Idiot*.

The defining hero may be known as The Young Man from the Provinces. He need not come from the provinces in literal sense; his social class may constitute his province. But a provincial background and rearing suggest the simplicity and the high hopes he begins with—he starts with a great demand upon life and a great wonder about its complexity and promise. He may be of good family, but he must be poor. He is intelligent, or at least aware, but not at all shrewd in worldly matters. He must have acquired a certain amount of education, should have learned something about the world from books, although not the truth.

The hero of *The Princess Casamassima* conforms very exactly to type. The province from which Hyacinth Robinson comes is a city slum. 'He sprang up at me out of the London pavement', says James in the preface to the New York Edition of the novel. In 1883, the first year of his long residence in England, James was in the habit of prowling the streets and they yielded him the impression 'of some individual sensitive nature or fine mind, some strange obscure intelligent creature whose education should have been almost wholly derived from them, capable of profiting by all the civilization, all the accumulation to which they testify, yet condemned to see things only from outside—in mere quickened consideration, mere wistfulness and envy and despair'.

Thus equipped with poverty, pride and intelligence, the Young Man from the Provinces stands outside life and seeks to enter it. This modern hero is connected with the tales of the folk. Usually his motive is the legendary one of setting out to seek his fortune, which is what the folk-tale says when it means that the hero is seeking himself. He is really the third and youngest son of a poor woodcutter, the one to whom all our sympathies go, the good and misunderstood one, the bravest of all. He is likely to be in some doubt about his parentage—his father the woodcutter is not really his father. Our hero has, whether he says so or not, the common belief of children that there is some mystery about his birth. His real parents, if the truth were known, are of great and even noble estate. Julien Sorel of *The Red and the Black* is the third and youngest son of an actual woodcutter, but he is the spiritual

of Napoleon. In our day the hero of *The Great Gatsby* is not really the son of Mr. Gatz; he is said to have sprung 'from his Platonic conception of himself', to be, indeed, 'the son of God'. And Hyacinth Robinson, although fostered by a poor dressmaker and a habby fiddler, has an English lord for his real father.

It is the fate of the Young Man to move from an obscure position into one of considerable eminence in Paris or London or St. Petersburg, to touch the life of the rulers of the earth. His situation is as chancy as that of any questing knight of medieval romance. He is confronted by situations whose meanings are dark to him, in which his choice seems always decisive. He understands everything to be a 'test'. Parsifal at the castle of the Fisher King is not more uncertain about the right thing to do than the Young Man from the Provinces picking his perilous way through the irrationalities of the society into which he has been transported. That the Young Man be introduced into great houses and involved with large affairs is essential to his story, which must not be confused with the cognate story of the Sensitive Young Man. The provincial hero must indeed be sensitive and in proportion to the brassiness of the world; he may even be an artist; but it is not his part merely to be puzzled and hurt; he is not the hero of *The Way of All Flesh* or *Of Human Bondage* or *Mooncalf*. Unlike the merely sensitive hero, he is concerned to know how the political and social world are run and enjoyed; he wants a share of power and pleasure and in consequence he takes real risks, often of his life. The 'swarming facts' that James tells us Hyacinth is to confront are 'freedom and ease, knowledge and power, money, opportunity and satiety'.

The story of the Young Man from the Provinces is thus a strange one, for it has its roots both in legend and in the very heart of the modern actuality. From it we have learned most of what we know about modern society, about class and its strange rituals, about power and influence and about money, the hard fluent fact in which modern society has its being. Yet through the massed social fact there runs the thread of legendary romance, even of downright magic. We note, for example, that it seems necessary for the novelist to deal in transformations. Some great and powerful hand must reach down into the world of seemingly chanceless routine and pick up the hero and set him down in his complex and dangerous fate. Pip meets Magwitch on the marsh,

a felon-godfather; Pierre Bezuhov unexpectedly inherits the fortune that permits this uncouth young man to make his tour of Russian society; powerful unseen forces play around the proud head of Julien Sorel to make possible his astonishing upward career; Rastignac, simply by being one of the boarders at the Maison Vauquer which also shelters the great Vautrin, moves to the very centre of Parisian intrigue; James Gatz rows out to a millionaire's yacht, a boy in dungarees, and becomes Jay Gatsby, an Oxford man, a military hero.

Such transformations represent, with only slight exaggeration, the literal fact that was to be observed every day. From the late years of the eighteenth century through the early years of the twentieth, the social structure of the West was peculiarly fitted—one might say designed—for changes in fortune that were magical and romantic. The upper-class ethos was strong enough to make it remarkable that a young man should cross the borders, yet weak enough to permit the crossing in exceptional cases. A shiftless boy from Geneva, a starveling and a lackey, becomes the admiration of the French aristocracy and is permitted by Europe to manipulate its assumptions in every department of life: Jean Jacques Rousseau is the father of all the Young Men from the Provinces, including the one from Corsica.

The Young Man's story represents an actuality, yet we may be sure that James took special delight in its ineluctable legendary element. James was certainly the least primitive of artists, yet he was always aware of his connection with the primitive. He set great store by the illusion of probability and verisimilitude, but he knew that he dealt always with illusion; he was proud of the devices of his magic. Like any primitive story-teller, he wished to hold the reader against his will, to *enchant*, as we say. He loved what he called 'the story as story'; he delighted to work, by means of the unusual, the extravagant, the melodramatic and the supernatural, upon what he called 'the blessed faculty of wonder'; and he understood primitive story to be the root of the modern novelist's art. Professor Matthiessen speaks of the fairy-tale quality of *The Wings of the Dove*; so sophisticated a work as *The Ambassadors* can be read as one of those tales in which the hero finds that nothing is what it seems and that the only guide through the world must be the goodness of his heart.

Like any great artist of story, like Shakespeare or Balzac or

Dickens or Dostoievski, James crowds probability rather closer than we nowadays like. It is not that he gives us unlikely events but that he sometimes thickens the number of interesting events beyond our ordinary expectation. If this, in James or in any story-teller, leads to a straining of our sense of verisimilitude, there is always the defence to be made that the special job of literature is, as Marianne Moore puts it, the creation of 'imaginary gardens with real toads in them'. The reader who detects that the garden is imaginary should not be led by his discovery to a wrong view of the reality of the toads. In settling questions of reality and truth in fiction, it must be remembered that, although the novel in certain of its forms resembles the accumulative and classificatory sciences, which are the sciences most people are most at home with, in certain other of its forms the novel approximates the sciences of experiment. And an experiment is very like an imaginary garden which is laid out for the express purpose of supporting a real toad in fact. The apparatus of the researcher's bench is not nature itself but an artificial and extravagant contrivance, much like a novelist's plot, which is devised to force or foster a fact into being. This seems to have been James's own view of the part that is played in his novels by what he calls 'romance'. He seems to have had an analogy with experiment very clearly in mind when he tells us that romance is 'experience liberated, so to speak; experience disengaged, disembroiled, disencumbered, exempt from the conditions that usually attach to it'. Again and again he speaks of the contrivance of a novel in ways which will make it seem like legitimate flummery to the reader who is committed only to the premises of the naturalistic novel, but which the intelligent scientist will understand perfectly.

Certainly *The Princess Casamassima* would seem to need some such defence as this, for it takes us, we are likely to feel, very far along the road to romance, some will think to the very point of impossibility. It asks us to accept a poor young man whose birth is a darkly secret, his father being a dissipated but authentic English lord, his mother a French courtesan-seamstress who murders the father; a beautiful American-Italian princess who descends in the social scale to help 'the people'; a general mingling of the very poor with persons of exalted birth; and then a dim mysterious leader of revolution, never seen by the reader, the machinations of an underground group of conspirators, an oath taken to carry

out an assassination at some unspecified future day, the day arriving, the hour of the killing set, the instructions and the pistol given.

Confronted by a paraphernalia like this, even those who admire the novel are likely to agree with Rebecca West when, in her exuberant little book on James, she tells us that the novel is 'able and 'meticulous' but at the same time 'distraught' and 'wild' that the 'loveliness' in it comes from a transmutation of its 'perversities'; she speaks of it as a 'mad dream' and teases its vast unlikelihood, finding it one of the big jokes in literature that it was James, who so prided himself on his lack of *naïveté*, who should have brought back to fiction the high implausibility of the old novels which relied for their effects on dark and stormy nights, Hindu servants, mysterious strangers, and bloody swords cleansed on richly embroidered handkerchiefs.

Miss West wrote in 1916, when the English naturalistic novel with its low view of possibility, was in full pride. Our notion of political possibility was still to be changed by a small group of quarrelsome conspiratorial intellectuals taking over the control of Russia. Even a loyal Fabian at that time could believe that it was one of the perversities of *The Princess Casamassima* that two of its lower-class characters should say of a third that he had the potentiality of becoming Prime Minister of England; today Paul Muniment sits in the Cabinet and is on the way to being Prime Minister. In the '30s the book was much admired by those who read it in the light of knowledge of our own radical movements; it then used to be said that although James had dreamed up an impossible revolutionary group he had none the less managed to derive from it some notable insights into the temper of radicalism—these admirers grasped the toad of fact and felt that it was all the more remarkably there because the garden is so patently imaginary.

Yet an understanding of James's use of 'romance'—and there is 'romance' in Hyacinth's story—must not preclude our understanding of the striking literal accuracy of *The Princess Casamassima*. James himself helped to throw us off the scent when in his preface to the novel he told us that he made no research into Hyacinth's subterranean politics. He justified this by saying that 'the value I wished most to render and the effect I wished most to produce were precisely those of our not knowing, of society's not knowin

not only guessing and suspecting and trying to ignore, what "goes on" irreconcilably, subversively, beneath the vast smug surface'. And he concludes the preface with the most beautifully arrogant and truest thing a novelist ever said about his craft: 'What it all came back to was, no doubt, something like *this* wisdom—that if you haven't, for fiction, the root of the matter in you, haven't the sense of life and the penetrating imagination, you are a fool in the very presence of the revealed and assured; but that you *are* so armed, you are not really helpless, not without your source, even before mysteries abysmal.' If, to learn about the political movement of his time, James really did no more than consult his penetrating imagination—which, no doubt, was nourished like any other on conversation and the daily newspaper—then we must say that in no other novelist did the root of the matter go so deep and so wide. For the truth is that there is not a political event of *The Princess Casamassima*, not a detail of oath or mystery or danger, which is not confirmed by multitudinous record.

III

We are inclined to flatter our own troubles with the belief that the late nineteenth century was a peaceful time. But James knew actual violence. England was, to be sure, rather less violent than the Continent, but the history of England in the '80s was one of profound social unrest often intensified to disorder. In March of 1886, the year in which *The Princess Casamassima* appeared in book form, James wrote to his brother William of a riot in his street, of ladies' carriages being stopped and the occupants hustled, rifled, slapped and kissed'. He does not think that the rioters were unemployed working men, more likely that they were 'the great army of roughs and thieves'. But he says that there is 'immense destitution' and that 'everyone is getting poorer—from causes which, I fear, will continue'. In the same year he writes to Charles Eliot Norton that the state of the British upper class seems to be 'in many ways very much the same rotten and collapsible one of the French aristocracy before the Revolution'. James envisaged revolution and not merely as a convenience for fiction. But he imagined a kind of revolution with which we are no longer familiar. It is not a Marxian revolution. There is no surge of an angry proletariat led by a disciplined party which

plans to head a new strong state. Such a revolution has its conservative aspect—it seeks to save certain elements of bourgeois culture for its own use, for example, science and the means of production and even some social agencies. The revolutionary theory of *The Princess Casamassima* has little in common with this. There is no organized mass movement; there is no discipline, no party but only a strong conspiratorial centre. There are no plans for taking over the State and almost no ideas about the society of the future. The conspiratorial centre plans only for destruction, chiefly personal terrorism. But James is not naïvely representing radical Graustark; he is giving a very accurate account of Anarchism.

In 1872 at its meeting in The Hague, the First International voted the expulsion of the Anarchists. Karl Marx had at last won his long battle with Bakunin. From that point on, 'scientific socialism' was to dominate revolutionary thought. Anarchism ceased to be in the main current of political theory. But Anarchism continued as a force to be reckoned with, especially in the Latin countries, and it produced a revolutionary type of great courage and sometimes of appealing interest. Even in decline the theory and action of Anarchism dominated the imagination of Europe.

It is not possible here to give a discriminating account of Anarchism in all its aspects—to distinguish between the mutation which verges on Nihilism and that which is called Communism, or between its representatives, Sergei Nechayev who had the character of a police-spy and Kropotkin or the late Carlo Tresca who were known for their personal sweetness, or to resolve the contradiction between the violence of its theory and action and the gentle world toward which these are directed. It will have to be enough to say that Anarchism holds that the natural goodness of man is absolute and that Society corrupts it, and that the guide to Anarchist action is the desire to destroy Society in general and not merely a particular social form.

When, therefore, Hyacinth Robinson is torn between his desire for social justice and his fear lest the civilization of Europe be destroyed, he is dealing reasonably with Anarchist belief. 'The unchaining of what is today called the evil passions and the destruction of what is called public order' was the consummation of Bakunin's aim which he defended by saying that 'the desire for destruction is at the same time a creative desire'. It was not only

the State but all social forms that were to be demolished according to the doctrine of *amorphism*; any social form held the seeds of its birth and must therefore be extirpated. Intellectual disciplines were social forms like any other. At least in its early days Anarchism expressed hostility toward science. Toward the arts the hostility was less, for the early leaders were often trained in the humanities and their inspiration was largely literary; in the '90s there was a strong alliance between the French artists and the anarchist groups. But in the logic of the situation art was bound to come under the Anarchist fire. Art is inevitably associated with civil peace and social order and indeed with the ruling classes. Then, too, any large intense movement of moral-political action is likely to be jealous of art and to feel that it is in competition with the full awareness of human suffering. Bakunin on several occasions spoke of it as of no account when the cause of human happiness was considered. Lenin expressed something of the same sort when, after having listened with delight to a sonata by Beethoven, he said that he could not listen to music too often—'It affects your nerves, makes you want to say stupid, nice things and stroke the heads of people who could create such beauty while living in this vile hell. And you mustn't stroke anyone's head—you might get your hand bitten off.' And similarly the Princess of James's novel feels that her taste is but the evidence of her immoral aristocratic existence and that art is a frivolous distraction from revolution.

The nature of the radicals in *The Princess Casamassima* may, to the modern reader, seem a distortion of fact. The people who meet at the 'Sun and Moon' to mutter their wrongs over their beer are not revolutionists and scarcely radicals; most of them are nothing more than dull malcontents. Yet they represent with complete accuracy the political development of a large part of the working class of England at the beginning of the '80s. The first great movement of English trade unionism had created an aristocracy of labour largely cut off from the mass of the workers and the next great movement had not yet begun; the political expression of men such as met at the 'Sun and Moon' was likely to be as feeble as James represents it.

James has chosen the occupations of these men with great discrimination. There are no factory workers among them; at that time Anarchism did not attract factory workers so much as the

members of the skilled and relatively sedentary trades—tailors, shoemakers, weavers, cabinet-makers and ornamental metal workers. Hyacinth's craft of bookbinding was no doubt chosen because James knew something about it and because, being once a fine and a mechanic art, it perfectly suited Hyacinth's father, but it is to the point that bookbinders were largely drawn to Anarchism.

When Paul Muniment tells Hyacinth that the club of the 'Sun and Moon' is a 'place you have always overestimated', he speaks with the authority of one who has connections more momentous. The Anarchists, although of course they wished to influence the masses and could on occasion move them to concerted action, did not greatly value democratic or quasi-democratic mass organizations. Bakunin believed that 'for the international organization of all Europe, one hundred revolutionists, strong and seriously bound together, are sufficient'. The typical Anarchist organization was hierarchical and secret. When, in 1868, Bakunin drew up plans of organization, he instituted three 'orders': a public group to be known as the International Alliance of Social Democracy, then above this and not known to it the order of National Brothers, above this and not known to the Order of International Brothers, very few in number. James Muniment, we may suppose, is a National Brother.

For the indoctrination of his compact body of revolutionists Bakunin, in collaboration with the amazing Sergei Nechayev, compiled *The Revolutionary Catechism*. This vade-mecum might be taken as a guide-book to *The Princess Casamassima*. It instructs the revolutionist that he may be called to live in the great world and to penetrate into any class of society, the aristocracy, the Church, the army, the diplomatic corps. It tells how one goes about compromising the wealthy in order to command their wealth, just as the Princess is compromised. There are instructions on how to deal with people who, like James's Captain Sholto, are drawn to the movement by questionable motives; on how the little one is to trust the women of the upper classes who may be seeking sensation or salvation—the Princess calls it reality through revolutionary action. It is a ruthless little book: eventually Bakunin himself complains that nothing—no private letter, no wife, no daughter—is safe from the conspiratorial zeal of the co-author Nechayev.

The situation in which Hyacinth involves himself, his pledge to commit an assassination upon demand of the secret leadership, is not the extreme fancy of a cloistered novelist, but a classic Anarchist situation. Anarchism could arouse mass action, as in the riots at Lyons in 1882, but typically it showed its power by acts of terror committed by courageous individuals glad to make personal war against society. Bakunin canonized for Anarchism the Russian bandit, Stenka Razin; Balzac's Vautrin and Stendhal's Valbayre (of *Lamiel*) are prototypes of Anarchist heroes. Always ethical as well as instrumental in its theory, Anarchism conceived assassination not only as a way of advertising its doctrine and weakening the enemy's morale, but also as punishment or revenge or warning. Of the many assassinations or attempts at assassination that fill the annals of the late years of the century, not all were Anarchist but those that were not were influenced by Anarchist example. In 1878 there were two attempts on the life of the Kaiser, one on the King of Spain, one on the King of Italy; in 1880 another attempt on the King of Spain; in 1881 Alexander II of Russia was killed after many attempts; in 1882 the Phoenix Park murders were committed, Lord Frederick Cavendish, Secretary for Ireland, and Under-Secretary Thomas Burke being killed by extreme Irish nationalists; in 1883 there were several dynamite conspiracies in Great Britain and in 1885 there was an explosion in the House of Commons; in 1883 there was an Anarchist plot to blow up, all at once, the Emperor Wilhelm, the Crown Prince, Bismarck and Moltke. These are but a few of the terroristic events of which James would have been aware in the years just before he began *The Princess Casamassima*, and later years brought many more.

Anarchism never established itself very firmly in England as it did in Russia, France and Italy. In these countries it penetrated to the upper classes. The actions of the Princess are not unique for an aristocrat of her time, nor is she fabricating when she speaks of her acquaintance with revolutionists of a kind more advanced than Hyacinth is likely to know. In Italy she would have met on terms of social equality such notable Anarchists as Count Carlo Cafiero and the physician Enrico Malatesta, who was the son of a wealthy family. Kropotkin was a descendant of the Ruriks and, as the novels of James's friend Turgenev testify, extreme radicalism was not uncommon among the Russian aristocracy. In France in

the '80s and still more markedly in the '90s there were artistic, intellectual and even aristocratic groups which were closely involved with the Anarchists.

The great revolutionary of *The Princess Casamassima* is Hoffendahl, whom we never see although we feel his real existence. Hoffendahl is, in the effect he has upon others, not unlike what is told of Bakunin himself in his greatest days, when he could enthral with his passion even those who could not understand the language he spoke in. But it is possible that James also had the famous Johann Most in mind. Most figured in the London press in 1881 when he was tried because his newspaper, *Freiheit*, exulted in the assassination of the Czar. He was found guilty of libel and inciting to murder and sentenced to sixteen months at hard labour. The jury that convicted him recommended mercy on the ground that he was a foreigner and 'might be suffering violent wrong'. The jury was right—Most had suffered in the prisons of Germany after a bitter youth. It is not clear whether he, like James's Hoffendahl, had had occasion to stand firm under police torture, but there can be no doubt of his capacity to do so. After having served his jail sentence, he emigrated to America and it has been said of him that terrorist activities in this country centred about him. He was implicated in the Haymarket Affair and imprisoned for having incited the assassin of President McKinley; Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were his disciples, and they speak of him in language such as Hyacinth uses of Hoffendahl. It is worth noting that he was a bookbinder by trade.

In short, when we consider the solid accuracy of James's political detail at every point, we find that we must give up the notion that James could move only in the thin air of moral abstraction. A writer has said of *The Princess Casamassima* that it is 'a capital example of James's impotence in matters sociological'. The very opposite is so. Quite apart from its moral and aesthetic authority, *The Princess Casamassima* is a first-rate rendering of literal social reality.

IV

In his preface to the New York Edition of *The Princess*, James tells us of a certain autobiographical element that went into the creation of Hyacinth Robinson. 'To find his possible adventures

interesting', James says, 'I had only to conceive his watching the same public show, the same innumerable appearances I had myself watched and of watching very much as I had watched.'

This, at first glance, does not suggest a very intense connection between author and hero. But at least it assures us that at some point the novel is touched by the author's fantasy about himself. It is one of the necessities of successful modern story that the author shall have somewhere entrusted his personal fantasy to the tale; but it may be taken as very nearly a rule that the more the author disguises the personal nature of his fantasy, the greater its force will be. Perhaps he is best off if he is not wholly aware that he is writing about himself at all: his fantasy, like an actual dream, is powerful in the degree that its 'meaning' is hidden.

If Hyacinth does indeed express James's personal fantasy, we are led to believe that the fantasy has reference to a familiar situation. James puts an insistent emphasis upon his hero's small stature. Hyacinth's mere size is decisive in the story. It exempts him from certain adult situations—for example, where Paul Muniment overcomes the class barrier to treat the Princess as a woman, taking so full an account of her sexual existence and his own that we expect him to make a demand upon her, Hyacinth is detached from the sexual possibility and disclaims it. The intention is not to show him as unmanly but as too young to make the claims of maturity; he is the child of the book, always the very youngest person. And this child-man lives in a novel full of parental figures. Hyacinth has no less than three sets of parents: Lord Frederick and Florentine, Miss Pynsent and Mr. Vetch, Eustache Poupin and Madame Poupin, and this is not to mention the French-revolutionary grandfather and the arch-conspirator Hoffendahl; and even Millicent Henning appears, for one memorable Sunday, in a maternal rôle. The decisive parental pair are, of course, the actual parents, Lord Frederick and Florentine, who represent—some will feel too schematically—the forces which are in conflict in Hyacinth. Undertaking to kill the Duke as a step in the destruction of the ruling class, Hyacinth is in effect plotting the murder of his own father; and one reason why he comes to loathe the pledged deed is his belief that, by repeating poor Florentine's action, he will be bringing his mother to life in all her pitiful shame.

It is as a child that Hyacinth dies—that is, he dies of the withdrawal of love. James contrives with consummate skill the lonely circumstances of Hyacinth's death. Nothing can equal for delicacy of ironic pathos the incidents of the last part of the book in which Hyacinth, who has his own death warrant in his pocket, the letter ordering the assassination, looks to his adult friends for a reason of love which will explain why he does not have to serve it on himself, or how, if he must serve it, he can believe in the value of his deed. But the grown-up people have occupations from which he is excluded and they cannot believe in his seriousness. Paul Muniment and the Princess push him aside, not unkindly, only condescendingly, only as one tells a nice boy that there are certain things he cannot understand, such things as power and love and justification.

The adult world last represents itself to Hyacinth in the great scene of lust in the department store. To make its point the crueller, James has previously contrived for Hyacinth a wonderful Sunday of church and park with Millicent Henning¹; Millicent enfolds Hyacinth in an undemanding, protective love that is not fine or delicate but for that reason so much the more useful; but when in his last hunt for connection, Hyacinth seeks out Millicent in her shop, he sees her standing 'still as a lay-figure' under Captain Sholto's gaze, exhibiting 'the long grand lines' of her body under pretence of 'modelling' a dress. And as Hyacinth sees the Captain's eyes 'travel up and down the front of Millicent's person', he knows that he has been betrayed.

So much manipulation of the theme of parent and child, so much interest in lost protective love, suggests that the connection of Hyacinth and his author may be more intense than at first appears. And there is one consideration that reinforces the guess that this fantasy of a child and his family has a particular and very personal relation to James in his own family situation. The matter

¹ The reviewer for *The Athenæum* remarks it as 'an odd feature of the book that nearly all the action, or nearly all of which the date is indicated, takes place on Sundays'. The observation was worth making, for it suggests how certain elements of the book's atmosphere are achieved: what better setting for loneliness and doubt than Sunday in a great city? And since the action of the book must depend on the working schedule of the working-class characters, who, moreover, live at considerable distances from each other what more natural than that they should meet on Sundays? But the reviewer thinks that 'possibly a London week-day suggests a life too strenuous to be lived by the aimless beings whom Mr. James depicts'. The 'aimless beings' note was one that was struck by most of the more-or-less liberal reviewers.

which is at issue in *The Princess Casamassima*, the dispute between art and moral action, the controversy between the glorious regenerate past and the regenerate future, was not of merely general interest to Henry James, nor, indeed, to any of the notable members of the James family. Ralph Barton Perry in his *Thought and Character of William James* finds the question so real and troubling in William's life that he devotes a chapter to it. William, whom the antithesis often represented itself as between Europe and America—action, settled in favour of America and action. Henry settled, it would seem, the other way—certainly in favour of art. But whether Henry's option necessarily involved, as William believed, a decision in favour of the past, a love of the past, as people like to say, for the past's sake, may be thought of as the essential matter of dispute between William and Henry. The dispute was at the very heart of their relationship. They debated the matter out over the years. But in the having-out William was the aggressor, and it is impossible to suppose that his statement of the case did not cause Henry pain. William came to suspect that the preoccupation with art was very close to immorality. He was perhaps not so wrong as the clichés in defence of art would make him out to be; his real error lay in his not knowing that art—as a thing to contemplate or as a thing to make—was applied for his brother. His suspicion extended to Henry's work. He was by no means without sympathy for it, but he thought that Henry's great gifts were being put at the service of the finicking and refined; he was impatient of what was not robust in the same way he was. Henry, we may be sure, would never have wanted a diminution of the brotherly frankness that could tell him that *The Bostonians* might have been very fine if it had been only a hundred pages long; but the remark, and others of similar sort, could only have left his heart a little sore.

When, then, we find Henry James creating for his Hyacinth a situation in which he must choose between political action and the fruits of the creative spirit of Europe, we cannot but see that he has placed at the centre of his novel a matter whose interest is of the most personal kind. Its personal, its familiar nature is emphasized by Alice James's share in the dispute, for she and William were at one against their brother in aggressively holding a low view of England, and William's activism finds a loud and even shrill echo in Alice, whose passionate radicalism was, as

Henry said of her, 'her most distinguishing feature'. But far more important is the father's relation to the family difference. The authority of the elder Henry James could be fairly claimed by both his sons, for he was brilliantly contradictory on the moral status of art. If William could come to think of art as constituting a principle which was antagonistic to the principle of life, his father had said so before him. And Henry could find abundant support for his own position in his father's frequent use of the artist as one who, because he seeks to create and not to possess, most closely approximates in mankind the attributes of divinity.

The Princess Casamassima may, then, be thought of as an intensely autobiographical book, not in the sense of being the author's personal record but in the sense of being his personal act. For we may imagine that James, beautifully in control of his novel, dominant in it as almost no decent person can be in a family situation, is continuing the old dispute on his own terms and even taking a revenge. Our imagination of the 'revenge' does not require that we attribute a debasing malice to James—quite to the contrary, indeed, for the revenge is gentle and innocent and noble. It consists, this revenge, only in arranging things in such a way that Paul Muniment and the Princess shall stand for James' brother and sister¹ and then so to contrive events that, at the very moment when this brilliant pair think they are closest to the conspiratorial arcanum, the real thing, the true centre, to show that in actual fact they are furthest from it. Paul and the Princess believe themselves to be in the confidence of *Them*, the People, Higher Up, the International Brothers, or whatever, when really

¹ When I say that Paul and the Princess 'stand for' William and Alice, I do not mean that they are portraits of William and Alice. It is true that, in the conditioning context of the novel, Paul suggests certain equivalences with William James: in his brisk masculinity, his intelligence, his downright commonsense and practicality, most of all in his relation to Hyacinth: what we may most legitimately guess to be a representation is the *ratio* of the characters—Paul: Hyacinth: William: Henry. The Princess has Alice's radical ideas; she is called 'the most remarkable woman in Europe', which in effect is what Henry James said Alice would be if the full exercise of her will and intellect had not been checked by her illness. But such equivalence is not portraiture and the novel is not a family *roman à clef*. And yet the matter of portraiture cannot be so easily settled, for it has been noticed by those who are acquainted with the life and character of Alice James that there are many points of similarity between her and Rosy Muniment. Their opinions are, to be sure, opposite poles, for Rosy is a staunch Tory and a dreadful snob, but the very patness of the opposition may reasonably be thought significant. In mind and pride of mind, in outspokenness, in will and the licence given to will by illness there is similarity between the sister Paul and the sister of William and Henry. There is no reason why anyone interested in Henry James should not be aware of this, provided that it not be taken as the negation of Henry's expressed love for Alice—provided, too, that it be taken as an aspect of his particular moral imagination, a matter which is discussed below.

They are held in suspicion in these very quarters. They condescend to Hyacinth for his frivolous concern with art but Hyacinth, unknown to them, has received his letter of fatal commission; he has the death-warrant in his pocket, another's and his own; in spite of his having given clear signs of lukewarmness to the cause, he is trusted by the secret powers where his friends are not. In his last days Hyacinth has become aware of his desire no longer to read books but to write them—the novel can be thought of as Henry James's demonstrative message, to the world in general, to his brother and sister in particular, that the artist, quite as much as the man of action, carries his ultimate commitment and his death-warrant in his pocket. 'Life's nothing,' Henry James wrote to a young friend, '—unless heroic and sacrificial.'

James even goes so far as to imply that the man of art may be closer to the secret centre of things when the man of action is quite apart from it. Yet Hyacinth cannot carry out the orders of the people who trust him. Nor, of course, can he betray them—the novel which, in the book's last dry words, 'would certainly have proved much better for the Duke', Hyacinth turns upon himself. The vulgar and facile progressivism can find this to be a proof of James's 'impotence in matters sociological'—'the problem remains unsolved'. Yet it would seem that a true knowledge of society comprehends the real reality of the social forces it presumes to study and is aware of valences and consequences; it knows that sometimes society offers an opposition of motives in which the antagonists are in such a balance of authority and appeal that a man who so wholly perceives them as to embody them in his very being cannot choose between them and is therefore destroyed. This is known as tragedy.

V

We must not misunderstand the nature of Hyacinth's tragic fate. Hyacinth dies sacrificially, but not as a sacrificial lamb, wholly innocent; he dies as a human hero who has incurred a certain amount of guilt.

The possibility of misunderstanding Hyacinth's situation arises from our modern belief that the artist is one of the types of social innocence. Our competitive, acquisitive society ritualistically condemns what it practices—with us money gives status, yet we consider a high regard for money a debasing thing and we set a

large value on disinterested activity. Hence our cult of the scientist and the physician, who are presumed to be free of the acquisitive impulses. The middle class, so far as it is liberal, admires, from varying distances, the motives and even the aims of revolutionists; it cannot imagine that revolutionists have anything to 'gain'; the middle class itself understands gain. And although sometimes our culture says that the artist is a subversive idler, it is nowadays just as likely to say that he is to be admired for his innocence, for his activity is conceived as having no end beyond itself except possibly some benign social purpose, such as 'teaching people to understand each other'.

But James did not see art as, in this sense, innocent. We touch again on autobiography, for on this point there is a significant connection between James's own life and Hyacinth's.

In Chapter XXV of *A Small Boy and Others*, his first autobiographical volume, James tells how he was initiated into a knowledge of style in the Galerie d'Apollon of the Louvre. As James represents the event, the varieties of style in that gallery assailed him so intensely that their impact quite transcended aesthetic experience. For they seemed to speak to him not visually at all but in some 'complicated sound' and as a 'deafening chorus'; they gave him what he calls 'a general sense of glory'. About this sense of glory he is quite explicit. 'The glory meant ever so many things at once, not only beauty and art and supreme design, but history and fame and power, the world in fine raised to the richest and noblest expression.'

Hazlitt said that 'the language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power', and goes on to develop an elaborate comparison between the processes of the imagination and the processes of autocratic rule. He is not merely indulging in a flight of fancy or a fashion of speaking; no stauncher radical democrat ever lived than Hazlitt and no greater lover of imaginative literature, yet he believed that poetry has an affinity with political power in its autocratic and aristocratic form and that it is no friend of the democratic virtues. We are likely not to want to agree with Hazlitt—we prefer to speak of art as if it lived in a white bungalow with a garden, a wife and two children and was harmless and quiet and co-operative. But James is of Hazlitt's opinion; his first great revelation of art came as an analogy with the triumphs of the world; art spoke to him of the imperious world.

with the music of an army with banners. Perhaps it is to the point that James's final act of imagination, as he lay dying, was to call his secretary and give her as his last dictation what purported to be an autobiographical memoir by Napoleon Bonaparte.

But so great an aggression must carry some retribution with it, and as James goes on with the episode of the Galerie d'Apollon, he speaks of the experience as having the effect not only of a 'love-philtre' but also of a 'fear-philtre'. Aggression brings guilt and then fear. And James concludes the episode with the account of a nightmare in which the Galerie figures; he calls it 'the most appalling and yet most admirable' nightmare of his life. He dreamed that he was defending himself from an intruder, trying to keep the door shut against a terrible invading form; then suddenly there came 'the great thought that I, in my appalled state, was more appalling than the awful agent, creature or presence'; whereupon he opened the door and, surpassing the invader for 'straight aggression and dire intention' pursued him down a long corridor in a great storm of lightning and thunder; the corridor was seen to be the Galerie d'Apollon. We do not have to presume very far to find meaning in the dream, for James gives us all that we might want; he tells us that the dream was important to him, that, having experienced art as 'history and fame and power', his arrogation seemed a guilty one and represented itself as great fear which he overcame by an inspiration of straight aggression and dire intention and triumphed in the very place where he had had his imperious fantasy. An admirable nightmare indeed. One needs to be a genius to counter-attack nightmare; perhaps this is the definition of genius.

When James came to compose Hyacinth's momentous letter from Venice, the implications of the analogue of art with power had developed and become clearer and more objective. Hyacinth has had his experience of the glories of Europe and when he writes to the Princess his view of human misery is matched by a view of the world 'raised to the richest and noblest expression'. He understands no less clearly than before 'the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies and the rapacities of the past'. But now he recognizes that 'the fabric of civilization as we know it' is inextricably bound up with this injustice; the monuments of art and learning and taste have been reared upon coercive power, yet never before has he had the full vision of

what the human spirit can accomplish to make the world 'less impracticable and life more tolerable'. He finds that he is ready to fight for art—and what art suggests of glorious life—against the low and even hostile estimate which his revolutionary friends have made of it; and this involves, of course, some reconciliation with established coercive power.

It is easy enough, by certain assumptions, to condemn Hyacinth and even to call him names. But first we must see what his position really means and what heroism there is in it. Hyacinth recognizes what very few people wish to admit, that civilization has a price and a high one. Civilizations differ from each other as much in what they give up as in what they acquire; but all civilizations are alike in that they renounce something for something else. We do right to protest this in any given case that comes under our notice and we do right to get as much as possible for as little as possible; but we can never get everything for nothing. Nor, indeed, do we really imagine that we can. Thus, to stay within the present context, every known theory of popular revolution gives up the vision of the world 'raised to the richest and noblest expression'. To achieve the ideal of widespread security, popular revolutionary theory condemns the ideal of adventurous experience. It tries to avoid doing this explicitly and it even, although seldom convincingly, denies that it does it at all. But all the instincts or necessities of radical democracy are against the superabundance and arbitrariness which often mark great spirits. It is sometimes said in the interests of an ideal or abstract completeness that the choice need not be made, that security can be imagined to go with richness and nobility of expression. But we have not seen it in the past and nobody really strives to imagine it in the future. Hyacinth's choice is made under the pressure of the counter-choice made by Paul and the Princess; their 'general rectification' implies a civilization from which the idea of life raised to the richest and noblest expression will quite vanish.

There have been critics to say that Hyacinth is a snob, and the surrogate of James's snobbery. But if Hyacinth is a snob, he is of the company of Rabelais, Shakespeare, Scott, Dickens, Balzac and Lawrence, men who saw the lordliness and establishment of the aristocrat and the gentleman as the proper condition for the spirit of man, and who, most of them, demanded it for themselves, as poor Hyacinth never does, for 'it was not so much that he

wished to enjoy as that he wished to know; his desire was not to be pampered but to be initiated'. His snobbery is no other than that of John Stuart Mill when he discovered that a grand and spacious room could have so enlarging effect upon his mind—when Hyacinth at Medley had his first experience of a great old house he admired nothing so much as the ability of a thing to grow old without loss but rather with gain of dignity and interest; the spectacle of long duration unassociated with some sordid infirmity or poverty was new to him; for he had lived with people among whom old age meant, for the most part, a grudging and degraded survival'. Hyacinth has Yeats's awareness of the dream that a great house embodies, that here the fountain of life 'overflows without ambitious pains',

And mounts more dizzy high the more it rains
As though to choose whatever shape it wills
And never stoop to a mechanical
Or servile shape, at others' beck and call.

But no less than Yeats he has the knowledge that the rich man who builds the house and the architect and artists who plan and decorate it are 'bitter and violent men' and that the great houses 'but make our greatness with our violence' and our 'greatness with our bitterness.'¹

By the time Hyacinth's story draws to its end, his mind is in a perfect equilibrium, not of irresolution but of awareness. His sense of the social horror of the world is not diminished by his newer sense of the glory of the world. On the contrary, just as his pledge of his life to the revolutionary cause had in effect freed him to understand human glory, so the sense of the glory quickens his response to human misery—never, indeed, is he so sensitive to the sordid life of the mass of mankind as after he has had the revelation of art. And just as he is in an equilibrium of awareness, he is also in an equilibrium of guilt. He has learned something of what may lie behind abstract ideals, the envy, the impulse to revenge and dominance. He is the less inclined to forgive what he sees because, as we must remember, the triumph of the revolution presents itself to him as a certainty and the act of revolution as an ecstasy. There is for him as little doubt of the revolution's success

¹ 'Ancestral Houses' in *Collected Poems*. The whole poem may be read as a most illuminating companion-piece to *The Princess Casamassima*.

as there is of the fact that his mother had murdered his father. And when he thinks of revolution, it is as a tremendous tide, a colossal force; he is tempted to surrender to it as an escape from his isolation—one would be lifted by it 'higher on the sun-touched billows than one could ever be by a lonely effort of one's own'. But if the revolutionary passion that has its guilt Hyacinth's passion for life at its richest and noblest is no less guilty. It leads him to consent to the established coercive power of the world, and this can never be innocent. One cannot 'accept' the suffering of others, no matter for what ideal, no matter if one's own suffering be also accepted, without incurring guilt. It is the guilt in which every civilization is implicated.

Hyacinth's death, then, is not his way of escaping from irresolution. It is truly a sacrifice, an act of heroism. He is a hero of civilization because he dares do more than civilization does: embodying two ideals at once, he takes upon himself, in full consciousness, the guilt of each. He acknowledges both his parents. By his death he instructs us in the nature of civilized life and by his consciousness he transcends it.

VI

Suppose that truth be the expression, not of intellect, nor even, as we sometimes now think, of will, but of love. It is an outmoded idea, and yet, if it has still any force at all, it will carry us toward an understanding of the truth of *The Princess Casamassima*. To be sure, the legend of James does not associate him with love; indeed, it is a fact symptomatic of the condition of American letters that Sherwood Anderson, a writer who himself spoke much of love, was able to say of James that he was the novelist of 'those who hate'. Yet as we read *The Princess Casamassima* it is possible to ask whether any novel was ever written which, dealing with decisive moral action and ultimate issues, makes its perceptions and its judgements with so much loving-kindness.

Since James wrote, we have had an increasing number of novels which ask us to take cognizance of those whom we call the underprivileged. These novels are, of course, addressed to those of us who have the money and the leisure to buy books and read them and the security to assail our minds with accounts of the miseries of our fellowmen—on the whole, the poor do not read about the poor. And in so far as the middle class has been satisfied and

gratified by the moral implications of most of these books, it is not likely to admire Henry James's treatment of the poor. For James represents the poor as if they had dignity and intelligence in the same degree as people of the reading class. More, he assumes this and feels no need to insist that it is so. This is a grace of spirit that we are so little likely to understand that we may resent it. Few of our novelists are able to write about the poor so as to make them something more than the pitied objects of our facile sociological minds. The literature of our liberal democracy pets and handles its under-privileged characters, and, quite as if it had the right to do so, forgives them what faults they may have. But James is sure that in such people, who are numerous, there are the usual human gradations of understanding, interest and goodness. Even if my conjecture about the family connection of the novel be wholly mistaken, it will at least suggest what is unmistakably true, that James could write about a working man quite as if he were as large, wilful and complex as the author of *The Principles of Psychology*. At the same time that everything in the story of *The Princess Casamassima* is based on social difference, everything is also based on the equality of the members of the human family. People at the furthest extremes of class are easily brought into relation because they are all contained in the novelist's affection. In that context it is natural for the Princess and Lady Aurora Langrish to make each other's acquaintance by the side of Rosy Muniment's bed and to contend for the notice of Paul. That James should create poor people so proud and intelligent as to make it impossible for anyone, even the reader who has paid for the privilege, to condescend to them, so proud and intelligent, indeed, that it is not wholly easy for them to be 'good', is, one ventures to guess, an unexpressed, a never-to-be-expressed reason for finding him 'impotent in matters sociological'. We who are liberal and progressive know that the poor are our equals in every sense except that of being equal to us.

But James's special moral quality, his power of love, is not wholly comprised by his impulse to make an equal distribution of dignity among his characters. It goes beyond this to create his unique moral realism, his particular gift of human understanding. If in his later novels, James, as many say he did, carried awareness of human complication to the point of virtuosity, he surely does not do so here, and yet his knowledge of complication is here very

considerable. But this knowledge is not an analytical one, or not in the usual sense in which that word is taken, which implies a cool dissection. If we imagine a father of many children who truly loves them all, we may suppose that he will see very vividly their differences from each other, for he has no wish to impose upon them a similarity which would be himself; and he will be quite willing to see their faults, for his affection leaves him free to love them, not because they are faultless but because they are they; yet while he sees their faults he will be able, from long connection and because there is no reason to avoid the truth, to perceive the many reasons for their actions. The discriminations and modifications of such a man would be enormous, yet the moral realism they would constitute would not arise from an analytical intelligence as we usually conceive it but from love.

The nature of James's moral realism may most easily be exemplified by his dealings with the character of Rosy Muniment. Rosy is in many ways similar to Jennie Wren, the dolls' dressmaker of *Our Mutual Friend*; both are crippled, courageous, quaint, sharp-tongued and dominating and both are admired by the character among whom they have their existence. Dickens unconsciously recognizes the cruelty that lies hidden in Jennie, but consciously he makes nothing more than a brusque joke of her habit of threatening people's eyes with her needle. He allows himself to be deceived and is willing to deceive us. But James manipulates our feelings about Rosy into a perfect ambivalence. He forces us to admire her courage, pride and intellect and seems to forbid us to take account of her cruelty because she directs it against able-bodied or aristocratic people. Only at the end does he permit us the release of our ambivalence—the revelation that Hyacinth doesn't like Rosy and that we don't have to is an emotional relief and a moral enlightenment. But although we, by the author's express permission, are free to dislike Rosy, the author does not avail himself of the same privilege. In the family of the novel Rosy's status has not changed.

Moral realism is the informing spirit of *The Princess Casamassima* and it yields a kind of social and political knowledge which is hard to come by. It is at work in the creation of the character of Millie Cent Henning, whose strength, affectionateness and warm sensuality move James to the series of remarkable prose arias in her praise which punctuate the book; yet while he admires her, he

knows the particular corruptions which our civilization is working upon her, for he is aware not only of her desire to pull down what is above her but also of her desire to imitate and conform to it and to despise what she herself is; Millicent is proud of doing nothing with her hands, she despises Hyacinth because he is so poor in spirit as to consent to *make* things and get dirty in the process, and she values herself because she does nothing less genteel than exhibit what others have made; and in one of the most pregnant scenes of the book James involves her in the peculiarly corrupt and feeble sexuality which is associated in our culture with exhibiting and looking at luxurious things.

But it is in the creation of Paul Muniment and the Princess that James's moral realism shows itself in fullest power. If we seek an explanation of why *The Princess Casamassima* was not understood in its own day, we find it in the fact that the significance of this remarkable pair could scarcely have emerged for the reader of 1886. But we of today can say that they and their relationship constitute one of the most masterly comments on modern life that has ever been made.

In Paul Muniment a genuine idealism coexists with a secret desire for personal power. It is one of the brilliances of the novel that his ambition is never made explicit. Rosy's remark about her brother, 'What my brother really cares for—well, one of these days, when you know you'll tell me,' is perhaps as close as his secret ever comes to statement. It is conveyed to us by his tone, as a decisive element of his charm, for Paul radiates what the sociologists, borrowing the name from theology, call *charisma*, the charm of power, the gift of leadership. His natural passion for power must never become explicit, for it is one of the beliefs of our culture that power invalidates moral purpose. The ambiguity of Paul Muniment has been called into being by the nature of modern politics in so far as they are moral and idealistic. For idealism has not changed the nature of leadership, but it has forced the leader to change his nature, requiring him to present himself as a harmless and self-abnegating man. It is easy enough to speak of this ambiguity as a form of hypocrisy, yet the opposition between morality and power from which it springs is perfectly well conceived. But even if well conceived, it is endlessly difficult to execute and it produces its own particular confusions, falsifications and even lies. The moral realist sees it as the source of

characteristically modern ironies—such as the liberal exhausting the scrupulosity which made him deprecate all power and becoming extravagantly tolerant of what he had once denounced, or the idealist who takes licence from his ideals for the unrestrained exercise of power.

The Princess, as some will remember, is the Christina Light of James's earlier novel, *Roderick Hudson*, and she considers, as Madame Grandoni says of her, 'that in the darkest hour of her life, she sold herself for a title and a fortune. She regards her doing so as such a terrible piece of frivolity that she can never for the rest of her days be serious enough to make up for it.' Seriousness has become her ruling passion and in the great sad comedy of the story it is her fatal sin, for seriousness is not exempt from the tendency of ruling passions to lead to error. And yet it has an aspect of heroism, this hunt of hers for reality, for a strong and final basis of life. 'Then it's real, it's solid!' she exclaims when Hyacinth tells her that he has seen Hoffendahl and has penetrated to the revolutionary holy of holies. It is her quest for reality that leads her to the poor, to the very poorest poor she can find, and that brings a light of joy to her eye at any news of suffering or deprivation, which must surely be, if anything is, an irrefrangible reality. As death and danger are—her interest in Hyacinth is made the more intense by his pledged death and she herself eventually wants to undertake the mortal mission. A perfect drunkard of reality, she is ever drawn to look for stronger and stronger drams.

Inevitably, of course, the great irony of her fate is that the more passionately she seeks reality and the happier she becomes in her belief that she is close to it, the further removed she is. Inevitably she must turn away from Hyacinth because she reads his moral seriousness as frivolousness; and inevitably she is led to Paul, who, as she thinks, affirms her in a morality which is as real and serious as anything can be, an absolute morality which gives her permission to devalue and even destroy all that she has known of human good because it has been connected with her own frivolous, self-betraying past. She cannot but mistake the nature of reality, for she believes it is a thing, a position, a finality, a bed-rock. She is, in short, the very embodiment of the modern will which masks itself in virtue, making itself appear harmless, the will that hates itself and finds its manifestations guilty and is able to exist only if it operates in the name of virtue, that despises the variety and

modulations of the human story and longs for an absolute humanity, which is but another way of saying a nothingness. In alliance with Paul she constitutes a striking symbol of that powerful part of modern culture that exists by means of its claim to political innocence and by its false seriousness, the political awareness that is not aware, the social consciousness which hates consciousness, the moral earnestness which is moral luxury.

The fatal ambiguity of the Princess and Paul is a prime condition of Hyacinth Robinson's tragedy. If we comprehend the complex totality that James has thus conceived, we understand that the novel is an incomparable representation of the spiritual circumstances of our civilization. I venture to call it incomparable because, although other writers have provided abundant substantiation of James's insight, no one has, like him, told us the truth in a single luminous act of creation. If we ask by what magic James was able to do what he did, the answer is to be found in what I have identified as the source of James's moral realism. For no novelist can tell the truth about Paul and the Princess only if, while he represents them in their ambiguity and error, he also shows them to exist in their pride and beauty: the moral realism that shows the ambiguity and error cannot refrain from showing pride and beauty. Its power to tell the truth arises from its power of love. James had the imagination of disaster and that is why he is immediately relevant to us; but together with the imagination of disaster he had what the imagination of disaster often destroys and in our time is daily destroying, the imagination of love.

REX WARNER

WHERE SHALL JOHN GO?

XV—GREECE

GREECE is one of those countries about which one would expect to have illusions. One was encouraged to expect them in one's early days at school by classical masters who would shake their heads sadly as they mentioned what they clearly envisaged as an inferior race, 'the modern Greeks'. As for the ancient Greeks, or, more simply 'the Greeks', they were often represented as a

people of astonishing intellectual ability and physical beauty greatly superior to every race that has existed before or since except perhaps in one respect, that they lacked the advantages of the British constitution. And this strange view was held and imparted even by schoolmasters who had read Thucydides.

As one grew older, read more and came under the influence of better scholars one began to realize that the ancient Greeks were not a nation of prefects, double firsts and running blues. But there was much more to admire—not only the literature which one was beginning to understand, but a kind of shapeliness and brilliance in thought and conduct, even when, by all standards, both thought and conduct were immoral. I can think, for instance, of no traitor so great and so sympathetic as Alcibiades. There is a kind of clarity about both the vices and virtues of the ancient Greeks which gives even to their history the form, the outline and the impressiveness of art. So that, if one pursues one's classical studies further than the rudiments, one still, as a rule, ends with admiration as one had begun. Only the admiration is based on fact and is often combined with affection.

Nor is the admiration confined to those who have had a classical education. It is difficult to embark on any form of study without constantly coming across 'the Greeks'. It is almost impossible to listen to the Brains Trust, and quite impossible to listen to Professor Joad without hearing of the names and theories of philosophers who died more than two thousand years ago and who yet command the respect of thinking people. No one, in fact, especially in England, can avoid feeling either a deep affection or an admiration, genuine or grudging, for these splendid and ancient people.

Thus there is every reason to expect disillusion with the realities of today. Byron certainly encourages us in this.

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet:
Where has the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?

Astonishingly priggish verses, and, one would imagine, very unsound from a military point of view.

Let us imagine then that one comes to Greece for the first time expecting to find a beautiful, if rocky, country, expecting, even in the height of the summer, an agreeable climate, anxious to visit

the monuments and know the people, though in both these respects prepared to be disappointed. What happens? The first and most remarkable thing is that there is no disappointment. Greece is better than one would have expected. The country is more beautiful than one would have imagined. No adequate idea can be gained from photographs of the Acropolis, of Delphi, of Ephnai, of Mycenae and the rest. As for the people, except for the fact that they really are ancient, they are, with the obvious and natural differences, very like the people of Aristophanes and Thucydides. They have their dances 'as yet'; their 'phalanxes' covered themselves with glory in the Albanian war; there is an extremely vigorous intellectual life among all classes; there is hospitality, charm, friendliness and, with all this, an extraordinary true valuation of ideas and persons; there is that strong sense of self-respect and of independence which, perhaps more than anything else, makes it easy for Greeks and English to get on together; there is an instinct for individualism, with all the advantages and disadvantages of what appears to be, in most of the world, a lost-losing cause. And along the streets of Athens at regular intervals are notices marked 'STASIS', a word familiar to students of Thucydides as meaning 'faction' or 'civil strife'. Today it simply means 'Bus Stop', but the old meaning is, unfortunately, as real as ever.

There are many other resemblances between the Greece of today and the Greece which we learned about at school. One of the most striking of these is the fact of its isolation. Beyond all its land frontiers are countries of widely different race and different ways of thought. It would be impolite and inaccurate to call the natives of these countries 'barbarians', but it is true that the Greek feels himself today, as he felt himself two thousand years ago, the representative of a culture and a way of life which is different from that which surrounds him on all sides.

This isolation of the country is, of course, much more thorough today than it was before the war, when one could enter Greece easily either by sea or land. Today there is no regular communication with the rest of Europe by land, and indeed land communications between Athens and Salonica are difficult enough. As for the sea there is a regular service from Marseilles to Piraeus in an overcrowded but extremely well-fed Greek ship; but much the greater part of Greek shipping was sunk in the war. The traveller

from England to Greece nowadays will, almost certainly, and whether he likes it or not, proceed by air.

If he gets a place on one of the new Viking air liners, he will travel in considerable comfort and what seems to me indecent speed, perhaps having breakfast in London and dining in Athens the same evening. No doubt, if he is one of those people who regard time as money, he will be glad to do this. Personally I prefer the uncertainties and sometimes the discomfort of the R.A.F. transport planes which took the journey more slowly and gave their passengers at least one night in Rome or Naples on the way. One would then be likely to arrive in Greece by brilliant daylight, and Greece is one of the very few countries over which it is a pleasure to fly.

I still do not know what it is which gives to the scenery of Greece, even from the air, some quality which is unique. The mountains and plains of Italy are impressive enough. Why is it that, when one has left these behind and, having passed over the sea, surveys the first inhospitable isles of Greece, brown folded masses of rock, often uninhabited and uninhabitable, with their steep sides diving below the white and green rim of a sea that seems suddenly to have become more blue, why is it that the fine scenery of Italy, by contrast, appears theatrical and, in this clear distinct light over the rocks, one is tempted to believe that only Greece is genuine? 'There is something about the light' people say, and it seems true, though why the light in Greece should be unlike the light in Italy or the light in Egypt I cannot imagine.

Or is it something different altogether? I know of no scenery which is so apt to provoke a sort of daylight mysticism, no scenery which, with all its clarity, appears also to have something 'far more deeply interfused', to be drenched and penetrated by the heroic the legendary, the divine. Crossing Corfu in an aeroplane, one's eye is held by the rock in the harbour that is supposed to be the ship of Odysseus, struck by Poseidon's trident. Then island follows island. Somewhere here, one thinks, took place the first action of the Peloponnesian War. Soon comes the flat ground associated with Byron and the heroes of the fight for independence. Finally one is over the Gulf of Corinth; on one's left was fought the battle of Lepanto; further on are Parnassus and Helicon then the isthmus and the canal blocked at each end by sunk ships and over to the right the towering fortifications of Acrocorinth.

Then Megara, Salamis, Aegina and, a brown city surrounded by mountains, Athens. I am convinced that even a person to whom these names and their history meant nothing would still feel a mounting excitement as he crossed this sea.

Let us, however, in all senses, come down to the solid earth. Arrived at Athens, how will our imaginary traveller live? And to answer this question we must have more precise information about him. If he has a good job, or plenty of money, or a friend already in possession of a house, he will live very comfortably. Otherwise he will find life expensive. Accommodation, clothes and food are all (particularly the first two) much dearer than they are in England. Drinks are much cheaper. And with regard to food it should be said that, though in the shops it is expensive, in the restaurants you will get a great deal more to eat than you are likely to get in any restaurant in London.

The whole subject of eating and drinking in Greece deserves fuller treatment than can be given to it here. First, perhaps, the Englishman may observe with surprise the number of establishments set apart for these pursuits. Cafés are open all day and most of the night. In Athens there are restaurants and tavernas to suit every taste and most pockets, and they are all over the town. Every village, every assembly of a few houses has its taverna, and on the bathing beaches and deserted stretches of road also you will constantly be seeing rough roofs of dried pine-branches or more ambitious buildings where ouzo and retsina can be drunk with olives, cheese or fish. The Greeks are a social people and spend much more of their time in eating, drinking and talking than does the ordinary Englishman. They also sing and dance after their meals. Their songs, and in particular their folk-songs, are undeniably beautiful. Their dances, like so much else in the country, have a freshness and vitality which is yet seen to spring from a tradition of great antiquity. It is natural, almost inevitable, to dance in the course of any kind of celebration and even simply after the day's work. In the cafés and tavernas in the evening groups of three or four young men will wait their turn to step into the space between the tables and perform, each one taking his turn to lead the dance, while his neighbour supports him with his hand and the handkerchief that links their hands. Others in the room will watch the performances critically, and the performers themselves will give the utmost attention to their technique.

I have watched a Greek soldier, who was so drunk that he could scarcely walk, suddenly achieve such a degree of concentration, when his turn came, that, although normal movement was beyond him, his dancing steps were executed with certainty and precision. Incidentally it should be pointed out that drunkenness is much more common among the English than among the Greeks. This I attribute not so much to any moral superiority of the Greeks as to the fact that they are civilized enough not to confine their pleasures to fixed and limited hours. And, while still on the subject of Greek dancing, I would suggest that a study of the steps and the rhythms of the dances today might be rewarding to authorities on ancient Greek metres. As one watches the slow deliberate emphasis, the pauses, the quick controlled movement of the dancing feet, textbook words and phrases like 'anacrusis' 'the cyclic dactyl' and the rest begin to mean something more than they used to mean.

Dancing, music, wine and song—these are common to the whole of Greece. So, too, you will find everywhere a quick, inquiring intellect, hospitality, courage, strong and opposed feelings. In other respects there are great differences between one part of the country and another. Indeed this fact of variety constitutes the greatest difficulty in description. There are many Greeces—historically, culturally, geographically—and, though they are all Greece, they are all various. How can one speak even of 'the islands' when each island has its own individuality? Some things are certainly the same everywhere—the light, the olive and fig trees. But there is a world of difference between the luxuriance of Corfu, for example, and the austerity of Aegina. Islands, too, have different smells. When you are far out at sea, but approaching a coastline, sometimes it will be the smell of pine trees, sometimes of thyme and aromatic plants which will strike the sense.

'Our anchorages were shores steeped in the perfume of night, among the singing of birds, waters that left on the hands the recollection of a great good fortune.'

So writes the poet Seferis. He, more than any other writer whom I know, has been able to express not only the detail and clarity of the Greek scene, but also the sense of its extension in time and space and history. It may seem to the visitor from England that

the sun always shines, sky and sea are always blue, the mountains and the sea are always there. Yet, if he is at all observant, he will soon notice that every second the landscape is changing, that round the next corner there is always something new, that he will be surprised by what he imagined as familiar. Greece is fortunate today in having such poets as Sikelianos, Seferis, Elytis, such a painter as Ghika to express adequately at least some portions of her variety and, equally important, to convey the feeling of what is unexpressed.

What other advice can I give to our imaginary John? So far, I fear, I shall be suspect for having painted the prospect in too glowing colours, and, if he wants to hear the worst, I can add the information that most of the roads outside Athens are, by English standards, appalling, as are the lavatories in all but the best hotels. Many Greeks also do not seem to mind whether their food is hot or lukewarm. Many have understandable, but possibly unreasonable, prejudices against the Bulgarians. All are, by English standards, over-vehement in their views on politics. Apart from this, however much I rack my brain, I can think of no more evil to say.

John will notice also that I have not been informative as to detail. I have not described Athens or Salonica, Delphi or Mycenae, the islands or the mainland. He will have seen photographs of these places and they, even more than most photographs, will have been misleading. The duty of an adviser is to point this out and to declare, from personal experience, that these places and this people are, in real fact, much better than can be imagined by the aid of photographs or of articles in newspapers. There is a spirit in the scenery and in the people which has to be experienced to be understood.

I would say finally, then, to our imaginary traveller: 'Go to Greece by all means. You will not, unless you are fairly well off, find it a land of luxury. Along with the gaiety and brilliance of it all you will find bitter feelings and disillusionment with the post-war world. This you will find everywhere in Europe. But I can think of nothing more admirable in the world than this country and this people of Greece. If you do not love them, you cannot love anything.'

SELECTED NOTICES

Spearhead. The Falcon Press. 21s.

Leaves in the Storm. Lindsay Drummond. 10s. 6d.

The *Avant-Garde*! What a tintinnabulation the phrase sets up! There is, still mercifully predominant, the old tremor of romantic excitement. One remembers and regrets the long-ago days when Mr. Eliot belonged, not to England, but to us, when a corselet, paper-backed *Ulysses* was rolled among grey flannel trousers on the Newhaven boat, when we sat, in a small, hot room at Oxford, as close as we could to the square feet of Gertrude Stein. But in England the phrase has languished. 'It qui', I was asked in Paris, in 1944, 'est maintenant le chef de l'*Avant-Garde*?' Then they preserved the old military idiom, the old formations, and Sartre had his title just as Mauriac had another. But our army had disintegrated: bold leaders had fallen back into the main body; rash young men had rushed forward with apocalyptic banners only to fall before they ever made contact with an increasingly elusive enemy. We were no longer an army, but a disordered mob of treeboaters: Corporal Thomas raided a farm, singlehanded; Major Snwell mounted a machine-gun on the roof of his country house; Pilot Officer Huxley had explored altitudes which few of our more augmented machines could reach.

And so, without an *avant-garde*, still less with a titular chief of it, how pleasant it is to find in America a spearhead with clean edges and a sharp point, a body of 'advanced' writers neatly labelled and, in this large, glossy new book, neatly corralled for our examination! It is true that we may resent the neatness of the whole operation. It is true that the mere topographical fact of a writer's advanced position may excite us less than it once did. There was always, after all, a certain self-consciousness about this claim, a certain naïve assumption that mere *difference* was a quality to be admired. But it is important to guard against the fatuous jealousy peculiar to tailless foxes, or, in this case, to foxes who have lost their front paws. Admit that Mr. Laughlin's introduction to these *Ten Years of Experimental Writing in America* is a little bit ingenious; admit that there is much in this book which never deserved to be perpetuated, yet *Spearhead* is a fascinating, impressive and encouraging balance-sheet. 'What other country', asks the editor, 'has equalled this record?', and though he instantly and disarmingly withdraws his challenge, he did not choose to remove it from the text, and it does provoke one to a competitive stocktaking. And though, perhaps, this is not the wisest note for an editor to strike, the contents of Mr. Laughlin's collection show that he can at least ask his question without absurdity. In *this* field, the field of 'experimental' writing, England could certainly discover better poetry in the last decade and with Michaux, Ponge, Sartre and others the French. . . . But this, of course, is just what one ought to avoid. *Spearhead* should be judged on its own.

No new conformity is claimed, of course, and none, to one's relief, emerges. This miscellany represents no new movement in American literature, but simply the boldest, the strangest, the most individual occasions. What should one single out from these six hundred fat pages? A tiny, brilliantly comic story by Lionel Abel; H. J. Kaplan's strange capacity to produce wisdom out of

The admirable anti-Bolshevic satire of Georg Mann? The musical-cum-nance grotesqueries of Montagu O'Reilly? The compassion and the of Jack Jones? Here indeed, there is an *embarras de richesse*. Marianne deserves the instructed enthusiasm of a poet's praise; so does the verse Garcia Villa, which I found more satisfying than anything by Cummings, form it shares. In *Aunt Julia's Caesar*, Maude Hutchins is perhaps too for sophistication, but she achieves it, how she achieves it! Delmore tztz is a little heavy in his tread, but he makes his impression. Then there veterans of the *avant-garde*, Miller and Djuna Barnes, Pound, Carlos ns and Robert Penn Warren, all proved in their different arms. We them again, willingly enough. There is the execrable Kenneth Patchen, high reputation in America is a curious and disturbing phenomenon. is the tiresome and selfconscious Miss Boyle, the undistinguished Mr. h and the uncertain Mr. Saroyan. To quote from Patchen and Villa is s the best way to illustrate the heights and the depths which this volume

"The old guy put down his beer.

Son, he said,

(and a girl came over to the table where we were:
asked us by Jack Christ to buy her a drink).

Son, I am going to tell you something

The like of which nobody ever was told

(and the girl said, I've got nothing on tonight;
how about you and me going to your place?)

I am going to tell you the story of my mother's

Meeting with God.

(and I whispered to the girl: I don't have a room,
but maybe . . .).

Kenneth Patchen.

am so very am and
speak so very speak
and look my every hand
is for each all lovers' sake

and nowherever time
can farther never go
tomorrow cannot climb
over each least lover's brow

my every vein rings
now's lifest rose: my skull
is among the kings
in that danger steeple

where each air breathed
is a love to glow to sing
and each love wreathed
is but God's beginning

because He cannot be
until Am is Am in flame
fire is his dancing augury
to give Love his name.'

Jose Garcia Villa.

Call them, if one chooses, the Romantic and the Classical, but it would be more precise to call them bad verse and good. Yet it should be said that there is a little in this volume which is as nauseating as Patchen's excretion and more which has the freshness and astringency of Villa's excellent lines. Against our own will, America is in the process of producing an iconoclastic literature of real importance.

Leaves in the Storm makes no claim to embody the best in modern English writing, and it would be unfair to compare it with the American book. These 'pages taken from the (wartime) journals of some twenty-five temporary potential poets' do at least illustrate a mood and a tendency which can be compared with the mood of the Americans. It should be said in this place that a book was never more shamefully edited. 'We were a peaceful people,' say Mr. Schimansky and Mr. Treece, 'loving our old flannels, and sitting at the local and a cinema seat on Saturday. . . . We had been sitting in our chairs for a long time. We had been smoking our pipes for a long time. And our old slippers were so comfortable. . . .' How one forgets! But these conscientious editors are not content simply to remind us of our happy pre-war days; they re-appear before us at every fall of the curtain, interspersing the contributions of their flock with their own stimulating commentaries. 'Yes, it was the hour because it was the hour of self-sacrifice, of heroism, of comradeship, of self-forgetfulness: and above all it was the hour of laughter. Listen, and listen with the next writer and you will recall how great and human a time this was. Certainly this brings something to mind, the phrases, the sentiments—a far cry from the ring? But did the contributors suspect, one wonders, the form in which they were to be served up to us, the perpetual re-entries of these egregious compounds of the flatulent official sentiments which would seal up even the most disillusioned, even the most blasphemous entries? If this book is to be read without skipping everything in italics should be skipped.

The introductory claim is absurd in any case; in many of the contributions there is no poetry and little potentiality. 'Between Digging for Victory, housing child evacuees, and Making Things Homely for the soldiers and airmen encamped or billeted in most villages and country towns, our country people are well in the front of the back lines of defence.' So we heard! So we heard! There is a great deal of dullness in this book, moments of flagrant falsity and of wearisome whimsicality. But the publication is justified by ten or a dozen entries of real interest and merit. It is, alas (alas, for who would not rejoice in a new, shining name!), the known writers who are the most interesting, principally because they have learned how to be truthful. The patient and devastating honesty of Mr. Spender succeeds both in reviving our memories of 1939 and in saying something which is of more than topical interest. Fraser, Rayner Heppenstall, William Sansom, Alun Lewis, V. S. Pritchard—these are both the best-known names and the best entries. Cecily Mackay writes a setpiece on Portugal which is advanced enough for *Spearhead* and

beautiful. Hugo Manning is successfully introspective in hospital, and there are justifiable contributions by John Waller, Erik de Mauny and three or others.

One might plausibly imagine, of course, that the purpose of such a book was to provide samples of good prose, but to resurrect a period which has already begun to seem remote and strange. But these diverse contributions only remind us that 'good' prose is communicative prose, and that the success of bad prose is proved by its ineffectiveness. Mr. Pritchett enables us to see wartime Germany; the debased Hemmingway of Mr. Bert Stiles (one of three American contributors) utterly obscures for us the experiences of a liber-station. The dour, even at times acrid, personality of Mr. Heppenstall shows his careful pen, and his description of regimental life in Ulster is far more memorable and evocative than the desert battle conventionally depicted by Mr. Howard Clewes. Sartre has recently reduced his demand for a *littérature engagée* to no more than this, to the old truism that *prose* is purposive and is to be judged by its ability to communicate a meaning. Even clumsiness—and when Spender is by no means a deft writer of prose—is in this utilitarian context, a minor weakness. The patient practice of writing, implying as it usually does, the patient practice of feeling and thinking, is able to surmount a lack of the finer balance and felicity. What is utterly ineffective and immemorable is the conventional facility of journalists' prose.

An attitude emerges from this book. It is not common to all the contributors, but because it is shared by the best of them it is this attitude which is impressed on the reader's mind. The English writers do not show the same vigorous and defiant defiance of their society as the Americans do of theirs. Yet they make their own firm protest against the prevailing falsities of wartime values. Every contributor to *Leaves in the Storm* appears to have accepted the necessity of war, to have placed himself, however unwillingly, inside the social pale. But the more respectable of these writers are more conscious of the incidental ignobility of their cause than of its splendours. And so much have we accustomed ourselves to equating our writers with the exposed nerve of society that we accept their protest altogether for granted. When the nation says yes the writers either say no, or at best will immediately add a thousand qualifications to the uneasy affirmative. The accusation against writers that they are malcontent is a perfectly just one. Yet the English writer's protest lacks the passion of his American contemporary shows. He has made it for longer and he now makes it now against a far more elusive adversary. The England of Attlee, the England of Churchill, is hesitant, divided, insecure, and the doubts of the English writer are echoed everywhere about him. The writer in the barracks was not simply the unpopular boy at school; he found that some at least of his companions shared his own sad irony and that he wrote for a whole consolate minority. In America one suspects that this stage has not yet been reached. There the situation has a more archetypal simplicity, the small detachment of artists camped outside the citadel, devising, in their Spearhead, the new secret weapon of experimental verse or prose. Each position has its dangers. We are threatened with a lethargic semi-conformity; the Americans with the aridity of defiance for its own sake. But each, it hardly needs saying, has its own kind of rich possibility.

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